NOW 1

EDITORIAL. The Lotus Eaters HERBERT READ: Cult of Leadership. H. E. KAMINSKI: Bakunin and the International. GEORGE WOODCOCK: Restoration Culture. D. S. SAVAGE: Aldous Huxley. ALAGU SUBRAMANIAM: A Country Girl. JULIAN SYMONS: A Poet in Society.

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VOLUME ONE.

CONTENTS

NOTE TO READERS 2

EDITORIAL. *The Lotus Eaters* 3

HERBERT READ, *The Cult of Leadership* 9

H. E. KAMINSKI, *Bakunin and the First International* 20

FOUR DRAWINGS by JOHN OLDAY, *The Dance of Death* 35

POEMS by JULIAN SYMONS, GEORGE WOODCOCK, EMMANUEL LITVINOFF, ALAN ROOK, THEODORE SPENCER, JOHN BAYLISS, FRANCIS DOUGLAS, J. L. GODWIN. 39

D. S. SAVAGE, *Aldous Huxley; A Moralist's Progression* 46

GEORGE WOODCOCK, *Culture and Society in the Restoration Period.* 55

ALAGU SUBRAMANIAM *A Country Girl.* 63

JULIAN SYMONS *A Poet in Society.* 68

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NOTE TO READERS

THREE YEARS AGO, during the first winter of the war, I realised the need for a magazine that might in some degree replace the small literary reviews, such as New Verse, Twentieth Century Verse and Wales, which had vanished as early casualties in this war of our rulers against culture and freedom. I also felt there was a need for a forum of unpopular and minority views, a medium for what is termed "free expression" on social matters.

The magazine, NOW, appeared in the spring of 1940 as a cyclostyled sheet, containing contributions from a number of the more capable young writers, including Charles Madge, Kathleen Raine, Roy Fuller, H. B. Mallalieu, D. S. Savage and Keidrych Rhys. Two further numbers, printed, appeared by the autumn of 1940, including, among other new contributors, Frederic Prokosch, Julian Symons, Ruthven Todd and Nicholas Moore.

In March 1941 NOW was restarted on a more ambitious scale, with a wider range of contributors, including Herbert Read, Rhys Davies, James Hanley, John Middleton Murry, Roy Campbell, Hugh Ross Williams, Hugh I'Anson Fausset, Francis Scarfe and Julian Huxley.

Four numbers appeared. By the last, No. 7, I had come to realise the justice of a criticism made by Julian Symons, in which he attacked the 'free expression' policy, which had united in one review so many incompatible opinions, and contended that a small magazine was only justified if it represented a defined attitude

When, this year, I decided to collaborate with the Freedom Press in preparing a series of volumes of literary and social writings the title of NOW was transferred to the new venture, which, in many ways, is the natural conclusion of the line of development represented by the review.

So far as their social content is concerned, the volumes of NOW will be edited from an anarchist point of view. So far as their literary content is concerned, our criterion will be the quality of writing. Nor do we intend to exclude poets, essayists, story writers, because their political views do not coincide with our own. Indeed, we are grateful for their willing co-operation.

In fairness to these writers we must point out that their appearance in NOW does not mean necessarily that they subscribe to anarchist doctrines. In justice to ourselves, we must also point out that we do not necessarily agree with any political opinion that may be expressed in the literary section of NOW.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

Editorial

THE LOTUS EATERS

THE BREAKING of the uneasy European truce in September 1939 had effects on the state of mind of the British intelligentsia which, when they were fully apparent after the fall of the French Republic, seemed cataclysmic. They did not, however, represent any fundamental change in the nature of the intellectual outlook. They merely indicated, as we shall show, the typical action of muddled minds discarding one set of exploded misconceptions and hastily assuming other comfortable delusions for fear a temporarily empty brain might permit entry of any demon so unpleasant as the truth.

The years that preceded the war were marked by an attitude among the literati in which were curiously mingled pessimism and optimism, trust and misapprehension. There was a great craze for systematic creeds, whose efficacy passed undoubted and whose ideologies profoundly influenced the writing and the art form of the time. Marxism, with its artistic counterpart in social realism, and psycho-analysis, finding expression in surrealism, were the great fetichist beliefs of the day, and these influences dominated the literary content and form of the typical writing. There were minor currents as well, such as the waning Lawrence cult and the Yogism of Heard, but these had little influence on the main literary trends, and are mentioned only because they are further illustrations of the uncritical enthusiasm with which the literati surrendered themselves to the systems which gave them the illusion of a way out from the doom that shaded the other side of their mental visions.

Exaggerated ideas of the paradisial nature of Soviet Russia and the benevolent and altruistic intentions of its rulers were typical of the period. Writers, even when they perceived some of the flaws that were symptomatic of the general corruption within the body politic of the Soviet Union, saw in Communism of the Russian type, the way to a better society and in military alliance with Russia the way to world peace.

This was the brighter side of the astrological chart. The darker side was represented by the feeling that war was inevitable and that the dream systems were in reality but insubstantial protection against a stormy future. Through all the poetry of the time ran the dark thread of foreboding.

The foreboding was justified. War came, and blew down all the intellectual edifices which had sheltered a decade of writers. The Russian-German alliance on the eve of the war destroyed Com-

munism as an influence among the more intelligent and there followed a general weakening of the pre-war faiths. The intelligentsia began an aimless intellectual trek into the wartime wilderness, each searching for a faith that would bring his individual salvation. Meanwhile however, those with any influence were careful to save their skins and at the same time cash in on the opportunities for bright young men, without taking the responsibility or consequences of an anti-militarist stand. A few, indeed, faced tribunals, and some younger writers with little influence found themselves pushed into the army. The rest either settled down to decay in the Bastilles of the B.B.C. and the Ministry of Information, or entered the impasses of the Civil Defence services.

The turning away from Marxism and the Hegira towards a new faith are best illustrated in the 1930's poets Auden, Spender and Day Lewis, who were most prominent as fellow travellers pursuing an uneasy journey on the axles of the Communist party train.

Auden, as is well known, departed to America on the eve of the war. Unlike the busybodies of the House of Commons and the gutter press, we regard this as Auden's own concern. (But we also regard it as inconsistent and reprehensible that Auden should, as he did, make pro-war statements from his distant and then apparently safe retreat). Having left Marxism as well as England, Auden advanced in the direction of mysticism, and so far no definite attitude has appeared from his obvious mental confusion. There are, however, signs of the development of an anti-authoritarian tendency, which might crystallise into some form of anarchistic faith. There are indications of this in his poem *September* 1, 1941, incidentally one of his best works.

All I have is a voice
To undo the folded lie,
The romantic lie in the brain
Of the sensual man-in-the-street
And the lie of Authority
Whose buildings grope the sky:
There is no such thing as the State
And no-one exists alone,
Hunger allows no choice
To the citizen or the police,
We must love one another or die.

Spender, in many ways the most sensitive and intelligent member of the group, has shown a similar tendency. He has gone to the extent of writing a book concerning the Poet's attitude to society.

which is reviewed by Julian Symons in this volume of NOW. Symons has many hard things to say of Spender's book, and we must agree that it demonstrates in a depressing manner the vagueness and indecision of attitude of the intelligentsia in time of crisis. But, unlike Symons, we perceive a certain virtue in the fact that Spender at least expresses disapproval of the left politicians and doubt of the value of politics as a means of social action. But mere doubt of the value of political action does not approximate to anything like a constructively revolutionary attitude, and Spender combines his vague leanings towards anarchism with social democratic utterances and a support of the war and the government which hardly add up to a balanced social vision.

Day Lewis, the poet of the trio who became most immersed in Left party politics, has probably deviated the least from his former line. Before the war, he reached the low level of poetic inanity with such social realist conceits as.

Yes, why do we all, seeing a Communist, feel small?

Now he displays a similar and equally unpoetic humility before the fire-eating pikemen of the Home Guard. His billet in the Book Society has changed to a revolving chair in the Ministry of Information, but Mr. Lewis remains the same humble man. It is probably because he is so unsubtle a poet that he has let the cat out of the bag so clumsily in his "*Where are the War Poets?*" which gives a humiliating admission of ineptitude that goes for most of his generation.

> They who in panic or mere greed
> Enslaved religion, markets, laws,
> Borrow our language now and bid
> Us to speak in freedom's cause.
>
> is the logic of our times,
> No subject for immortal verse,
> That we who lived by honest dreams
> Defend the Bad against the Worse.

That the British intellectuals lived by dreams is true enough. That they still live by dreams is equally evident.

It is rare to find members of the intelligentsia who go even so far as to admit, like Day Lewis that they are defending 'the Bad against the Worse'. Or, if they do admit this, they tell themselves continually that Good can come out of the Bad, indeed, that Good *will* come out of the Bad. It rarely occurs to them that it is much more likely for the Bad to continue on its primrose path and in due course approximate to the Worse. They have, like the mandarins of *Horizon*, a naive belief that this war is, in the last analysis, really

being fought for freedom, and that at the end it will be quite a simple matter to persuade the ruling class to accept piecemeal 'revolutionary' changes in the social structure which will guarantee an easy life for all and plenty of good jobs for reformist writers in the yamens of culture and administration. The Bolshevik dream having broken before their eyes, the intellectuals have returned to the Lassallian dream of paradise on the glad-and-sorry.

The dream form of the world in which these inveterate opium eaters live can be seen in many ways—in their attitude to the war in general, in their attitude to liberty, in their attitude to the changes which all of them admit are necessary in the structure of society.

The fallacy of their attitude to the war is shown in the way they still accept the myth of the war as a struggle between two groups of powers whose rulers have differing attitudes to the idea of freedom. Germany, Japan, Italy, Roumania, Hungary, Bulgaria, etc. are fighting for slavery. England, America, Russia, China and all the ridiculous collections of waxworks who form the puppet governments without states, are fighting for freedom. In their statements, if not in their thoughts, it is as simple as that. The complete superficiality of this attitude can be seen simply by comparing the leaders of the 'democratic' powers with those of the Fascist powers, or, alternatively, by comparing the tendency of social development in England with that in Germany. Or, again, one might ask why the politicians who champion the freedom of the Poles are so stubborn in refusing it to the Indians.

The answers are easy, even for incumbents of the M. of I. Mr. Churchill and Mr. Bevin differ only in degree and not in kind from Herr Hitler and Dr. Ley. All four are concerned to destroy the liberty of the individual, as their actions tell more truly than their speeches. The tendency of social development in England is, as was demonstrated by Burnham in '*The Managerial Revolution*', similar to that in Germany, i.e., towards a consolidation of the state, a fusion of economic and political control, and the seizure of that control by a new ruling class of state and industrial managers. The answer to the third question is that the rulers of England and America are, in fact, no more interested in the freedom of the Polish people than they are in the freedom of the Indian people. They merely want to use the Poles and a new Polish state in the destruction of German hegemony in Europe and the establishment of their own. As they already hold the power in India, there is no object in their giving anything away to the Indians.

The conflict between groups of national states is not the important aspect of this war. What matters is not that England is fighting Germany, or America fighting Japan, that the Nazis are oppressing the Poles or the British Sahibs oppressing the Indians. These in

themselves are terrible facts, but expressed in this way they do not represent the real nature of the war. What is important is the way in which the war is being used in a counter-revolutionary manner to strengthen authority and crush out freedom in every country in the world. The significant war is not the horizontal one between England and Germany, but the vertical one between the rulers of England and Germany, America, Russia on one side, and on the other the ruled throughout the world.

This real war can be seen in the steady and cumulative attack on the liberties of the individual. This we can best observe in our own country, and we do not think anyone will deny that the freedom of the individual has already been reduced to a very small fraction of the already limited freedom we enjoyed in the days of peace-time capitalism. But this uncomfortable fact is by-passed by the consoling idea that the loss of liberty is temporary and necessary for the maintenance of the war, and that when Victory arrives, if it ever does, those who have suffered will be rewarded by a greater freedom. Of this there is no guarantee whatsoever. The promises of statesmen mean nothing, and, as we have already noted, the development of society is such that, unless there is a social revolution, the appearance of a nominal peace will not change the war structure of the state, because such a structure will be necessary for rulers to maintain their power, and under such conditions the return of lost liberties is more than unlikely.

This problem becomes more personally acute for those writers and artists who entered the civil defence services in the hope that such a compromise would grant them a certain leisure to carry on their work, and give them a quick return to liberty after the war. Now they see their spare time has been gradually and substantially curtailed, and recent government announcements make it seem likely that many of them will be forced to remain where they are for a long time after the end of hostilities, which seems far enough away.

A slightly more reasonable attitude is shown by those who realise their liberties are being filched and see that this is inconsistent with a war for freedom. But most of these become as unrealistic as the rest, for their protests and manifestos rest on an entirely superficial basis, because they take no account of the fact that the incidents in the attack on freedom are merely symptoms of the general social decline towards totalitarianism, which can be halted not by piecemeal treatment but only by a drastic surgery on the structure of society itself.

That society is now built on injustice is admitted by these intellectuals. It is admitted even by the rulers, who are steadily increasing that very injustice under the camouflage of pie-in-the-sky promises for the happy days of peace. But the intellectuals, as ever,

want the best of both worlds. They want to keep their present security and good positions, and at the same time to try and contrive some adjustment of the present order which will provide both for their future security and comfort and for the salving of their consciences by the improvement of the conditions of the masses. It is for this reason that intellectuals of all kinds, poets, architects, medical writers, agricultural writers, etc. have engaged in the great sport of planning, in which they become dupes of the governing class for whom the rosy tomorrow is an excellent means of stopping the people from asking for a decent today. The intellectual periodicals, from *The New Statesman* downwards, contain articles planning the future of almost every facet of the national life. Plans of a new London, of a new agriculture, of a new medicine, appear in the newspapers and are discussed seriously among the literati. It is proposed to plan the publishing trade, and every now and then a rumour thrills the depleted population of Bloomsbury and the Soho pubs. with talk of a planned culture with its own ministry and fat jobs in plenty in the mythical after-the-war.

None of these plans stands on any basis of economic or social security. They are almost all isolated from any general social conception of a changed society, and the planners hope, quixotically, that some progressive government will put them into practice.

In reality, these so-called 'revolutionary' plans cannot be carried out under the present economic and social system. They are of value only as symbolic indications of the dream life which their originators live, divorced intentionally from the realities of the social struggle.

No better world, no increase in freedom, no security for the intellectual or the worker can come except by the economic and social revolution which brings the abolition of authority, class and property, the destruction of the wages system and money relationships, and the end of the domination of man by man. Until then, there will be no basis for a radical readjustment of any plane of life, and certainly no guarantee of the freedom and economic security without which the intellectual, the artist and the scientist cannot develop to fulfilment.

Herbert Read

The Cult of Leadership

IN THIS essay I shall attempt to show that from a certain point of view there is nothing to choose between fascism and democracy—that under the conditions imposed by modern civilization, with its economic and military warfare, both fascism and democracy involve the cult of leadership, and that this cult is the denial of the principle of equality upon which alone a community of free individuals can be established. The distinction made by our propagandists between democracy and fascism is more or less consciously hypocritical, and the war we are fighting is largely a war between alternative forms of fascism. The alternative to fascism is not democracy as conceived by our democratic politicians: it is communism as conceived by the libertarian tradition of anarcho-syndicalism.

* * * * *

Fascism is a complex social phenomenon for which there is no single or simple explanation. It is obviously not a national phenomenon—it has triumphed in Latin-Italy, no less than in Nordic-Germany and some of its symptoms have been diagnosed in this country and the United States of America. I do not think it is worth wasting any time on the proposition—sedulously disseminated as a part of our war propaganda—that fascism is the inevitable development of certain historical trends in Germany. Germany was the weakest spot in the body of world politics, and for that reason it was most easily and most successfully affected by the disease. That weakness in the political structure of Germany can be explained historically, and German philosophers and jurists have quite naturally tended to find elaborate justification for the structural weakness in their state. But if a disease like cancer attacks, say, the liver, it is quite unscientific to say that the liver is the cause of the cancer. Cancer is a disease of the whole body which may become manifest in the liver or any other "weak spot".

I do not wish to dismiss the historical origins of fascism as of no importance: they do not explain why the disease should develop in one nation rather than in another. History investigates the organic tissue of society just as histology investigates the organic tissue of the human body. History is always *post mortem*—it can tell us why *this* happened *here*. But it cannot explain the processes governing the mind and the emotions of the collective organisms we call states or nations. The only science that can attempt such an explanation is psychology.

It will be said that I have forgotten economics. Marxists in particular will be eager to point out that I have forgotten my dialectical materialism, but I would claim to have remembered my dialectics as well as my materialism. There is no doubt that economic factors have played an enormous part in the growth of fascism. Hitler himself is fond of tracing the origins of his success to the injustices of the Versailles treaty, which was an undisguised expression of economic forces. He is not so fond of admitting what is equally true, that he was helped to power by certain groups of capitalists. But the fact that the most powerful of these capitalists, Thyssen, is an exile, and perhaps even a corpse, shows how little essential unity there was between the two parties. If Hitler represented any economic interest, it was that of the 'little man', the bankrupt shopkeeper, the small capitalist who had been put out of business by the big monopolies and chain stores. But even this sympathy was not genuine.

The real truth about the economic basis of fascism has been forcefully stated by an exiled German psychologist, Erich Fromm—"In the post-war period it was the middle class, particularly the *lower* middle class, that was threatened by the monopolistic capitalists. Its anxiety and thereby hatred were aroused; it moved into a state of panic and was filled with a craving for submission to power, as well as for domination over those who were powerless. These feelings were used by an entirely different class for a regime which was to work for their own interests. Hitler proved to be such an efficient tool because he combined the characteristics of a resentful, hating petty-bourgeois, with whom the lower middle class could identify themselves, emotionally and socially, with those of an opportunist who was ready to serve the interests of the German industrialists and Junkers. Originally he posed as the Messiah of the middle-class, promised the destruction of department stores, the breaking of domination of banking capital, and so on. The record is clear enough. These promises were never fulfilled. However, that did not matter. Nazism never had any genuine political or economic principles. It is essential to understand that the very principle of Nazism is its radical opportunism". *

* *The Fear of Freedom, p.* 190.

This fact has been proved, not only by the admission of ex-Nazis like Rauschning or Strasser, but by the course of events. After first allying themselves with the Soviets, the Nazis have declared a military crusade against Communism. Hitler and Goering have themselves become monopoly-capitalists; but at the same time they denounce the capitalists of Great Britain and America. I defy anyone to discover any consistent economic policy in the history of fascism. Fascism is not the expression of economic forces, but of psychological forces. It is power politics, and power politics have always shown an extreme contempt for economics and even for reason. For the craving for power is fundamentally an irrational force—it can no more be explained by economic factors than a craving for drink or for drugs, though like these cravings it can be encouraged or thwarted by economic factors.

The necessary analysis of that craving for power, which is the basic factor in the psychology of fascism, has been done, most convincingly, in my opinion, by the writer just quoted, Dr. Fromm. Any such analysis involves the use of more technical terms than I feel justified in using in the present essay. But let me try and summarize Dr. Fromm's argument very briefly. It begins dialectically enough with economic and historical factors—with the historical struggle of man to gain freedom from the political, economic and spiritual shackles which bound him through long centuries of darkness and despair. It shows that man has been again and again afraid to use the freedom he has gained, and has fallen back on some alternative system of control. He has submissively held up his wrists to a new gaoler—some new authoritarian religion, like calvinism; some new economic tyranny, like capitalism. The individual, it seems, is afraid to be alone. "To feel completely alone and isolated leads to mental disintegration, just as physical starvation leads to death". The individual craves for relatedness, for union, and, Fromm points out, "even being related to the basest kind of pattern is immensely preferable to being alone. Religion and nationalism, as well as any custom and any belief however absurd and degrading, if it only connects the individual with others, are refuges from what man most dreads: isolation". At this point Fromm makes a very effective quotation from Balzac—"But learn one thing, impress it on your mind which is still so malleable; man has a horror of aloneness. And of all kinds of aloneness, moral aloneness is the most terrible. The first hermits lived with God. They inhabited the world which is most populated, the world of spirits. The first thought of man, be he a leper or a prisoner, a sinner or an invalid, is: to have a companion of his fate. In order to satisfy this drive which is life itself, he applies all his strength, all his power, the energy of his whole life."

The true solution of this problem leads to communism, but communism in the original sense of the word as now used by the anarchists, and not in the sense used by Marxists and their opponents. I mean communism conceived as a spontaneous association of individuals for mutual aid. But lacking this conception, man has only been able to get rid of his isolation by forcible means—by those psychological obsessions which we call sadism and masochism. Sadism is the unconscious impulse to acquire unrestricted power over another person, and to test the fullness of this power by destroying that other person. Masochism is the impulse to dissolve oneself in the power of another person, to participate in the annihilating power. Fascism is the combined expression of these two unconscious impulses—its peculiarity resides in this ambivalence, this continual shifting from one impulse to the other, from the sadistic destructiveness to masochistic submissiveness.

There is no need for me to illustrate these characteristics from the behaviour of the fascist parties in Germany and Italy; that has been done in hundreds of books, and Hitler's own book *Mein Kampf* is at once a case book and a text book of these psychological aberrations. The Nazi leaders are driven by an overwhelming lust for power—that fact needs no demonstration. The Nazi followers are driven by an equally overwhelming lust to surrender themselves to this power.

Fromm's thesis, then, is that these sadistic and masochistic trends in modern history explain the inability of the isolated individual to stand alone, to make use of the freedom he has gained. Accepting this as a convincing explanation of the psychological forces underlying fascism, I want to ask whether there does exist among us certain tendencies of the same nature—tendencies which, if not checked, will inevitably lead to fascism, whatever the outcome of the present war.

II.

The most prevalent manifestation of these latent tendencies is the universal demand for leadership. Schools are urged to train boys for the "tasks of leadership", students are asked to develop the qualities of leadership, selection boards make these same qualities the criterion of their choice of candidates for commissions in the army, navy, and air force. Even workers are urged to select leaders —their shop stewards and shift leaders. In the political sphere we have adopted the *Fuehrerprinzip* without qualification. We don't call Mr. Churchill our "Fuehrer", but we give him all the attributes of a Fuehrer, and he has not shown any unwillingness to accept them.

Before we examine what is involved in this general desire for leadership, let us distinguish a quality which is often confused with leadership, and is perhaps, always incorporated in it. I mean the

quality of individual initiative. This is fundamentally the impulse to originate, to construct, and, in relation to other individuals, the desire to distinguish oneself. It is a self-expressive impulse, and has nothing in common with the will to power.

Now this realisation of the self, the expression of the uniqueness of the individual is, as I shall emphasize presently, one of the most essential features of an organic community, and must be preserved at all costs. But the individual can only realize himself in the community; or rather, the difference between realizing oneself in the community and realizing oneself in spite of the community is precisely the distinction I want to make. In the one case, the uniqueness of the individual becomes part of the pattern of society: in the other case, the individual remains outside the pattern, an unassimilated and therefore essentially neurotic element.

What I think emerges from these considerations is that the failure of democracy to realize an integrated pattern of society is largely due to its reliance on leaders. Through generations we have spent our blood and expended our utmost efforts on getting rid of the leadership of priests and kings, aristocrats and captains of industry, only to find that it has been futile, only to find ourselves with the same infantile longing to be led. We talk about the brotherhood of man, about comradeship and co-operation, and these phrases do describe the deepest instincts of humanity; but in actual fact we are children seeking a father, children full of mutual jealousy and suspicion, repeating on a national scale the neurotic conflicts of the family.

It may be argued that however beautiful they may be as ideals, brotherhood, comradeship, and co-operation are impracticable modes of conducting the business of a state in peace and war—especially in war. We are told that in war we must have discipline, and discipline implies command and obedience, commanders and obeyers, officers and privates. But in the past ten years the falseness of this assumption has been clearly demonstrated. It was clearly demonstrated in the last war, though victory had the unfortunate effect of making it unnecessary for us to learn the lessons of that conflict. But those lessons, which received a striking confirmation in the Spanish Civil War were not lost on our enemies, and their successes in Poland, in France, in Greece and everywhere except in Russia, where they came up against an army that had learnt the same lesson, is due precisely to what might be called the democratization of the army.

I know that to speak of the democratization of the Nazi army sounds paradoxical, but the opportunism which is the only principle underlying fascism is quite capable of adopting democratic methods to achieve an undemocratic end. At any rate, several independent witnesses have testified to the reality of the democratization of the

German army. Shirer, for example, in his *Berlin Diary*, reports that:

"The great gulf between officers and men is gone in this war. There is a sort of equalitarianism. I felt it from the first day I came in contact with the army at the front. The German officer no longer represents—or at least is conscious of representing—a class or caste. All the men in the ranks feel this. They feel like members of one great family. Even the salute has a new meaning. German privates salute each other, thus making the gesture more of a comradely greeting than the mere recognition of superior rank."

The alternative to discipline is morale, and morale depends, not on a relationship of command and obedience, but on a relationship of mutual trust. That is the psychological truth which war teaches, and which we, in the so-called democracies, are so slow to learn.

I do not wish to enter into an acadamic discussion between discipline and morale. We all know that discipline depends on the exercise of authority: it has been defined as "the enforced obedience to external authority" and nothing can disguise its bi-polar nature and internal strain. It is sometimes said that if discipline is thoroughly enforced it becomes instinctive, but that is not borne out either by psychological investigations or by military experience. It thus comes about that even while maintaining an undemocratic structure in the army, and an undemocratic structure of society, the present tendency of all governments is to rely on the creation of morale in the civilian population no less than in the armed forces.

Morale is a group feeling; it is a feeling of cohesion, of unity in the face of danger, and at present it is normally only brought about in conditions of danger, when the group is threatened with extinction. These conditions are brought about not only by war, but by threats of starvation or subjugation. The morale of a trade union on strike, for example, depends not only on class-consciousness, the struggle for better conditions of work and of life, but also on the direct feeling of insecurity occasioned by a stoppage of work.

The desirable form of society is one which succeeds in maintaining morale under conditions of peace. The feeling of relatedness, of union, which we all experience spontaneously when threatened by invasion, or air raids, or the blockade, should be realized for positive purposes, for the creation of a just society, a natural way of life. There again, I think the fascists have seized on an essential psychological truth—and distorted it by using it for their own ends. They realized that a society can only be built up on the principle of association. They had to abolish the existing organisations, because they were anti-fascist, but they replaced them by new organisations designed to canalize the national spirit. The whole of their educational system, their youth movement, their labour front

and their party organisation has no other aim but the creation of a spirit stronger than discipline. The morale thus achieved is not limited to the biological function of group preservation, but is extended to an ideological function of group-expansion, group-assertion, group-domination. A distortion thus arises from the fact that the spontaneous origin and organic growth of association is obliterated and replaced by an artificial and super-imposed conception of the state, by a new order which is essentially a planned order.

We must, therefore, clearly distinguish between the aims and the methods of fascism. The aims are entirely undemocratic, irrational, and irresponsible. But some of the methods—by no means all—are more democratic, more psychologically effective, and altogether more successful, than the methods hitherto used by the democracies. Even on the question of leadership, it seems to me that the Nazis in particular avoid the psychological crudities which we not only attribute to them, but innocently imitate. It seems to me—and I am mainly relying on what Hitler has written in *Mein Kampf*, and on his personal behaviour—that in their realization of the supreme importance of morale, the Nazis have adopted a conception of leadership which is radically different from that entertained in our public schools and military forces. The difference is rather a subtle one, but at least we must give Hitler some credit for sublety.

In his well-known work on "Psychology and Primitive Culture" Professor Bartlett discusses the relationship of the chief to the primitive group, and points out that "it is a relationship in which leadership does not depend mainly upon domination or assertion, but upon a ready susceptibility to the thoughts, feelings and actions of the members of the group. The chief, that is, *expresses* the group rather than *impresses* it. This is a kind of relationship, entirely different, it seems to me, from dominance and assertiveness . . . "

"A ready susceptibility to the thoughts, feelings and actions of the members of the group"—this phrase might be taken as an apt description of the very quality which Hitler claims to possess. No unprejudiced observer of his career can deny Hitler a certain representative character—though we must remember that a demagogue will always begin by creating the dissatisfaction which he then sets out to exploit. He earns his easiest honours by alleviating imaginary ills. But it is no ordinary faculty which enables a man to do that. Again, let me emphasize that we are concerned with an instrument and not with the use to which it is put. Intuition, to use for the moment the term Hitler himself seems to favour—intuition may be an admirable quality in a rational human being, a beneficient aid to the poet, the scientist and the engineer; but the same quality combined with a sadist craving for power becomes a destructive force.

I hope I have shown the dangerous ambiguity which lurks in

this cry for leadership, this reliance on a popular leader, which characterizes democratic, no less than fascist communities in time of war. It is, I believe, not merely a sign of weakness, a sign of war-weariness: it is positively the symptom of a latent state of fascism. If democracy is to maintain its essential difference from fascism, it must not compromise on this question of leadership. Leadership, in the sense of the dominance of the community by a single figure or a minority, is a principle of fascism. What, of course, remains in doubt is whether democracy as a militant organization, can dispense with leadership. It seems obvious, from the conduct and course of the war, that it cannot. What we need, we are told every day, is more and better leadership. But what this demand involves is a closer and closer approximation to fascism. The fascists alone have evolved an efficient form of leadership; efficient leadership *is* fascism. Opposed to the principle of leadership and wholly inconsistent with it, is the principle of equality. Equality is absolute: it is a mathematical term, expressing exact quantities. It does not admit of compromise, and whenever I hear a person tampering with this principle in the name of efficiency, or of ability, then I know I am in the presence of a fascist. You may say if you like that equality is not rational—that since people are not born equal, not equally endowed by nature—that therefore they do not deserve to live equally. But I do not claim that the principle of equality is a rational doctrine. On the contrary, it is an irrational dogma, a *mystique*. It lays down, precisely because people are born unequal, unequally endowed, they should in the common interest acknowledge a common dominator—a standard of citizenship to which all can aspire, and beyond which none shall venture. I say quite deliberately, that unless we are inspired by that mystical or mythical idea of social equality, we do not believe in the brotherhood of man.

III.

If this dogma is accepted, the practical question remains: how is it given expression in the organization of a modern community? Bernard Shaw, who sees the necessity for this dogma, suggests that it can only be given practical expression in equality of incomes. That, of course, is to remain bound to the concept of economic man, which is inevitable in an old-fashioned Fabian socialist like Bernard Shaw. Equality of income might well be the outward expression of equality of status, but in what other, in what more fundamental ways can equality be expressed?

It is curious that we should have to search for an answer to this question, because in spite of economic and social inequalities we in this country have in theory and to some extent in practice, enjoyed what we call "equality before the law". Laws might be unjust, and the expression of social prejudices rather than of natural equity,

nevertheless, for centuries a fair attempt has been made to administer them equally for all men. * In fact, you cannot divorce the idea of law from the idea of equity, and that is such a commonplace, such a logical conception (as some might say), such a tradition (as others might say), that we fail to appreciate the fact that it is by no means an inevitable state of affairs. Already under fascism we see a contrary conception of law emerging—one law for the Germans and another for the races they have subjugated; one law for the Aryans and another for Jews. More recently, Hitler has formally abrogated legal procedure in Germany, and has made his personal will superior to the idea of equity.

The social hierarchy which we accept almost as a natural order is just as unnatural and illogical as one law for the Germans and another for the conquered Poles. There is no natural aristocracy, — though there can be an unnaturally cultivated aristocracy, a pedigree stock of human beings no less than a pedigree stock of cattle. The upper classes and the middle classes—none of these is a class ordained by nature—they are all expressions of economic inequalities, inequalities which have sometimes lasted for generations. They are continually disturbed, not only by shifting fortunes, but by that displacement which sociologists call the circulation of élites, a phrase which merely expresses the biological fact that luxury and laziness will in the end debilitate the class which enjoys them, and that this class will sink and its place be taken by a class which has led a healthier life. But the circulation of élites—an idea very popular with fascist philosophers—is also not a natural phenomenon. At least, it is no more "natural" than the circulation of water in a boiling kettle; it is an expression of inequalities in social life—inequalities of work and nourishment and recreation. Equalize the temperature of water and it no longer circulates—equalize social conditions, let everybody lead a healthy life and then you will no longer get a circulation of élites.

And there the fascist philosopher—and some philosophers who call themselves democrats—think they have got you. Ah, they say, no circulation—that means stagnation. And stagnation means decay. War is justified solely on these grounds—that it prevents social stagnation and encourages the emergence of vital stock. A convincing rhetorical attitude can be struck if the circulation metaphor is maintained. But it is merely a figure of speech, a myth. Why all this hubble bubble, toil and trouble? Does not nature offer us alter-

* *In so far as they are administered! I am well aware that some people cannot afford "to go to law", but this injustice is economic and not legal: It should also be clear that I am not referring to the administration of civil law in Great Britain, and not to the law as administered, for example, in India.*

native metaphors of balance and symmetry, of poise and repose? The best fruit grows on the sheltered wall. The deepest waters are still. To a mind that is still, the whole universe surrenders. How easy it is to find, or invent, convincing metaphors of exactly the opposite tenor. Chinese philosophy is full of them. The universe is full of them. I know that the scientist can present a frightful picture of disintegrating worlds, of exploding suns and cooling planets, of nature red in tooth and claw. But the most fundamental discoveries of science are discoveries of significant design—the periodicity of the elements, the structure of the atom, the universal laws underlying organic forms—these are facts which any reasonable man will make the basis of a positive philosophy.

Lao Tzü, the great Chinese sage, formulated three rules of political wisdom, which required (1) abstentation from aggressive war and capital punishment, (2) absolute simplicity of living, and (3) refusal to assert active authority. These three rules express the true meaning of social equality. They imply that no man has the right to assert his authority over another man, and that likewise, no nation has the right to assert its authority over another nation. If no such right is exercised, by individuals or nations, then a state of political equality can exist. As for the second rule, which enjoins simple living, that too is not remote from the concept of equality. For the economic complexity of the modern world, involving economic hierarchies and inequalities of income, involving an economic conception of man himself—living man reduced to a commodity, like frozen mutton—this is entirely due to the feverish lust for luxuries. The rule does not deny us plenty; only he that is frugal is truly able to be profuse, says Lao Tzü. Indeed, unless there is plenty; equality can only be maintained by authority. and since we renounce authority, we should ensure plenty. Trotsky once expressed the whole truth in a vivid way; if there is a scarcity of goods in the shops, people will form queues, and if there are queues in the streets, you will have to have police to keep them in order. Law, we might say, is an expression of want.

But it is time I began to draw these observations to some conclusion. I have been questioning the cult of leadership; I assert that it is a denial of the principle of equality. As a counter-part to this cult of leadership, we find a state of social irresponsibility, to which I might have devoted more time. But the symptoms of submissiveness, of lethargy and apathy, need no description. I would like to point out, however, that they are not confined to the politically ignorant—I know of no more disastrous example of irresponsibility than the behaviour of the trade unions during the past 30 years. Not only have they repeatedly failed to achieve international unity among the workers of the world: they have been afraid to

assume the responsibilities within their grasp at home. I have myself heard one of the leading trade union officials from Transport House declare that the unions had not the necessary managerial ability to control their own industries, and that therefore their policy must be one of compromise and joint control with the employers. That is one instance of what I mean by irresponsibility, and perhaps it deserves a stronger word.

Responsibility is the alternative to leadership, and the counterpart of equality. If each individual in the social body is a responsible member of that body, there is no need for an external control of the members. The body acts as an organic whole, and acts spontaneously. The members of the body politic are, of course, differentiated according to their function; one is a farmer and another an engineer, one a nurse and another a doctor; and among these members are some whose function is to co-ordinate others. These are organisers, the administrators and the managers who are essential to a complicated industrial society; but I see no reason why the co-ordinator should be more highly placed or more highly paid than the originator, the creator, the worker. The manager owes his present status and prestige, not to the nature of his work, but to his control of economic power. In any natural society, he would be as unobstrusive as a railway signalman in his box.

I personally believe that life should be immensely simplified—that much of the complexity of modern society is merely the final complication of the sickness we call civilization. But even our elaborate society can be a functional society, and I see no reason why all functions, which are equally necessary to the health of society, should not have social equality. That at any rate, is the proper meaning of communism, and communism in this sense, the communism of Bakunin and not that of Marx, is the only alternative to fascism.

H. E. Kaminski

Bakunin and the International

THE INTERNATIONAL, or to give its official name, the International Working Men's Association, had been founded in 1864 in London, on the initiative of the English workers' organisations, but the influence of Marx had soon become preponderant. It was he who led the General Council, which at the same time governed the English section, relying above all for support on the English workers who formed the strongest group within the International. In the Inaugural Address Marx had set forth to the organisation his programme, which demanded the seizure of power by the working class and affirmed their world-wide identity of interests, returning to the theme of the Communist Manifesto "Workers of all lands unite!"

At the outset the followers of Mazzini had tried to seize control of the International but Marx had easily thrust them aside. While exercising some influence among workers Mazzini had no real power over them. The entry of Bakunin into the International was a much more serious menace to the tactics of Marx. Mazzini had only acted through intermediaries: Bakunin brought the whole weight of his personality and no one could regard him simply as a member of the rank and file. As much as Marx he was a leader and the working class organisations in Switzerland, Italy and Spain, regarded him as the representative of their ideas. It was almost inevitable that the antagonism between the two men should change before long into an open struggle. No organisation could contain two men with such personalities as Marx and Bakunin.

They were alike only in their absolute devotion to the social revolution, which they had both reached through their Hegelian philosophy. For the rest they were as different in character as in ideas.

Son of a lawyer who descended from a long line of rabbis, Marx had the outward characteristics of the upper middle class. Scion of a family of high state officials and landed gentry, Bakunin retained the insouciance of the feudal nobility. Marx, wedded to an

This excerpt, from Kaminski's "Bakounine", which appears for the first time in English, has been specially translated for NOW.

aristocrat and father of two daughters whom he married to prominent disciples, led the quiet and industrious life of a scholar; the poverty he experienced weighed heavily upon him and he made great efforts to hide it. Bakunin, also married, remained the perpetual student, full of energy and always eager for action; money was unimportant to him; he gave it or borrowed it with the same ease. Marx was reserved, cold, his manner blunt, punctilious and vindictive. Bakunin was sociable, spontaneous, open and naif like a child, but at the same time cunning as a peasant.

Marx was methodical both in his daily life and in his thoughts. He never started anything without thorough consideration and when he took a position he never abandoned it. Bakunin was unmethodical, bohemian in life as well as in ideas; he allowed events to guide him, he relied on his instincts and often he submitted to influences which led him away from his path.

For Marx, theory came before action. For Bakunin action preceded theory. Thus Marx was inductive, Bakunin was deductive. Marx was guided by thought, Bakunin by inspiration. Marx detested the capitalist system because he found its methods of production too anarchic. Bakunin hated it because it was not anarchic enough. Marx aimed at order, Bakunin at harmony. Marx dreamed of ruling, Bakunin of destroying . Marx execrated all that was chaotic; Bakunin worshipped in chaos creative thought. The genius of Marx lay in his narrowness. The greatness of Bakunin came from what the Russians call "a large nature".

One came from the town, and the factory was for him the laboratory where the future was in preparation. The other came from the country, and for him the earth remained the great producer of all wealth. Thus Marx believed only in the industrial workers, while Bakunin's hopes lay in the peasants. For Marx the revolution was born of industry which created the proletariat and forced them to union and solidarity. For Bakunin the revolution was an elemental and autonomous force which the workers can only release. Thus Bakunin considered the needs and demands of the working class as a starting point for the revolution, in the same way as, for example, the struggle against religion or the right of inheritance. Marx on the contrary, did not even interest himself in these questions and he refused to fight against injustices or superstitions which in his eyes were only the consequences or the symptoms of the capitalist system. For, according to Marx, Socialism is a science and the revolution an ordered process, while according to Bakunin, socialism (or anarchy) is an ideal and the revolution a spontaneous outburst. Consequently Marx believed only in the systematic action of the working class which he wished above all to teach and make conscious of its historic role as a liberator of humanity. Bakunin considered such overt action as incomplete; he even feared that it would

only lead to transforming the workers into a reformist petit-bourgeoisie and he was convinced that the most important preparation for the revolution lay in conspiracy.

The weapon of Marx was the party, the weapon of Bakunin the secret society. The Party of Marx would conquer the State and use it to organise the Socialist world. The Secret Society of Bakunin would guide the masses to the destruction of the State and the creation of a world without coercion. Marx was centralist and desired unity, Bakunin was federalist and desired only variety. Marx was authoritarian, Bakunin was anti-authoritarian.

Both were materialists in the philosophical sense; that is to say—that they attributed all phenomena to material causes. But, if Marx aspired to the liberation and the dictatorship of the proletariat, because he was convinced that it would struggle in this way for the freedom of humanity, he almost disguised this idealist aim. On the other hand, Bakunin flaunted his ideals and attached less importance to economic demands. For, according to Marx, the method of production determined the course of history, whereas according to Bakunin, the evolution of people was by obscure and intuitive movements. Also Marx was concerned above all with economics. But to Bakunin man was all important.

From the very beginning of their relationship the two men were moved by a violent antipathy towards each other. Working in the same organisation they became inevitable rivals and very soon mortal enemies.

In order to understand this situation it must be remembered that the first International consisted of widely assorted organisations which were united only by common interests and ideals; the inaugural address itself asked of its members no more than they should have as their aim "the protection, progress and total emancipation of the working class". The adhesion of the Alliance* to the International was consequently quite natural and in principle there was no fundamental opposition between them. Nevertheless Marx wished to make the International a Marxist organisation, just as Bakunin wished to make it an anarchist organisation.. On this point the struggle became inevitable. But if the Marxists pretended that the Bakuninists conspired against the International, the Bakuninists can make the same accusation against their opponents; for in reality, it was a struggle between two factions who both wished to convert the International to their views.

The Alliance was confined to Geneva. In the other federations, Bakunin wielded his influence through the International Brotherhood. It was therefore to this organisation that Marx should have made the reproaches he addressed to the Alliance. The Brotherhood had only a few hundred members who agreed beforehand on the

**The Social-Democratic Alliance, founded by Bakunin in 1868.*

position to adopt, just as Marx did in his correspondence with his supporters. It is easy to exaggerate the influence of a secret society such as the Brotherhood, just as the importance of the First International is often overestimated. In fact, the Brotherhood was no more in a position to undermine the International than the latter was to undermine the capitalist world. That different federations adhered some to Marx, some to Bakunin, can be explained much more easily by their innate tendencies than by hidden influences.

Violent and venomous as was the rivalry between Marx and Bakunin, it did not pass beyond the theoretical plane. Neither of them had at his disposition forces sufficient to carry their differences beyond the conference halls and polemical writings. But the importance of the conflicts within the International was not in their immediate effects; it was in fact that they anticipated other struggles on an infinitely larger scale.

The sections of the International in French-speaking Switzerland were grouped in a federation centred at Geneva. The Federation published a periodical, *Egalité*, whose editors were Bakunin and the French worker Perron. The articles Bakunin wrote therein bore already the mark of revolutionary sydicalism. He proclaimed that the salvation of the working class lay only in its free organisation and the direct action of the daily struggle, above all, in strikes which one day would culminate in the general strike and the social revolution. If he did not deny the usefulness of the co-operative organisations which were the great hope of the reformists, he did not however rely on the immediate improvements they could bring about; but he believed they would teach the workers the way in which to manage their enterprises after the overthrow of the capitalist society. The conflict between the partisans of the Alliance and those of the International was based on the eternal question which splits all working class organisations. One section advocated the uncompromising class struggle, the other was prepared for compromise. Basically it was the same debate around the ever recurrent programme of opportunism, revisionism, ministerialism or reformism which sets the intransigeant revolutionaries against those who prefer gradual ameliorations to an expectation which may be endless.

The Internationalists thought above all of parliamentary elections. To gain votes they even proposed to renounce the sections of their programme which demanded the abolition of property and the right of inheritance. Bakunin was not in principle against parliamentarianism, but he refused to put participation in the elections above more important demands. He only regarded elections as a means of propaganda. The idea of influencing bourgeois legislation seemed to him ridiculous and incompatible with the objects of

the revolutionaries. Naturally he made many enemies. Nevertheless as long as he remained in Geneva the majority of the Federation supported him.

If the differences between Bakunin and Marx took form in Geneva, their ideas clashed openly for the first time at Basle, where in the Autumn of 1869 the International held its annual conference. Bakunin attended, whereas Marx, who did not like to travel and was no orator, stayed away. Other members of the general council, led by Eccarius, represented him. Their mandate was to foil Bakunin, whose influence, which Marx considered disastrous, had increased in all sections of the International. Above all, the proposition of his antagonists to include in the programme of the International the fight against the right of inheritance seemed to Marx in complete contradiction to the principles of scientific socialism.

In the written statement of the General Council, of which he was the author, Marx declared that at the most one could demand a limitation of the right of inheritance and an increase in death duties. For, according to his argument, laws were only the consequence of the economic conditions; thus the right of inheritance is an expression of the capitalist system and cannot disappear without it. Bakunin on the contrary was convinced that this struggle offered an excellent means of propaganda capable of gathering a large section of the masses around the International. He also recognised that the law only consecrated facts but he argued the law itself became a fact. Born of certain conditions the laws of inheritance had in this way become the foundation of the political State, the juridical family, and all private property. "It is why we are for the abolition of the right of inheritance". This time also Marx was scientifically logical, while Bakunin was using a new lever to put Capitalism off its balance. Bakunin did not obtain the absolute majority necessary for a change of the programme but most of the delegates voted for his proposition. Similarly on other questions, the role of the syndicates and legislation by plebiscite, the Congress showed a tendency towards anti-governmentalism and federalism in the sense of Bakunin. "Marx will be extremely displeased" declared Eccarius.

The Congress at Basle had also to consider the personal honour of Bakunin, for since the tension between the partisans of the Alliance and the International had become more acute, the old calumny accusing him of being a Russian agent had reappeared. Wilhelm Liebknecht, one of the leaders of the social democrats whose name was to be immortalised by his son Karl, had adopted it by publishing it in his periodical *Volksstaat*. The Congress named a court of honour to examine the accusation after an enquiry. The jury naturally reached the conclusion that it was without foundation. Liebknecht made a public apology and promised Bakunin that he

would publish a recantation in his paper; he even invited him to collaborate. Bakunin then declared the incident closed and used the judgment to light a cigarette.

However, the judgment never appeared in the *Volksstaat*. The conflict between the Marxists and the Bakuninists became on the contrary more and more violent. It is pointless to say that it provoked the worst passions and that the adversaries used all the methods common to factional fights. Marx sent confidential circulars to the faithful and Bakunin addressed private letters to his partisans. He had 44 correspondents; to 19 he wrote at least twice a week, to 6 at least twice a month.

The partisans of the Alliance revolted against the plurality of functions of the General Council, which controlled the whole International as well as the English section. Thereupon Marx replied: "In spite of the fact that revolutionary initiative would probably belong to France, only England can serve as the lever for a serious economic revolution . . . . . The English possess all the material conditions necessary to social revolution. What they lack is the spirit of generalisation and the revolutionary passion. The General Council alone is capable of inspiring them and in this way accelerating a true revolutionary movement in this country and as a result of that, everywhere".

While Bakunin ignored the circular which contained these affirmations, it is hardly necessary to emphasize how much ideas of this kind were opposed to his entire outlook. He did not believe that the centre of the revolution would be England and still more he was the declared enemy of all direction which pretended to impose its spirit on the masses of the workers.

In another confidential circular written after the death of Herzen, Marx went so far as to insinuate that Bakunin had published eulogistic obituary notices on Herzen in order to inherit the 25,000 francs of income which the latter received from the panslavists. Bakunin on his side did not hesitate to use antisemitic arguments against the Jewish collaborators of Marx, notably against Utin who excited his particular anger.

Utin was in fact commissioned by Marx to collect information concerning Bakunin and he addressed himself to this filthy task with much zeal. Furthermore, he founded the Russian Section of the International, directed against what he called "The old and pernicious ideas of panslavism". This did not stop him some years later from making his peace with the Tsarist Government and returning humbly to Russia.

For a long time however, Bakunin did not attack Marx personally and he explained his conduct in one of his last letters to

Herzen: "I know as well as you that Marx is no less to blame than the others; I do not even ignore that he has been the instigator and the leader of all the calumnious and infamous polemics which have been let loose against us. Why, then, have I spared him? I have praised him, I have done more than that, I have given him the title of giant. For two reasons, dear Herzen. The first is justice: leaving aside all the filth which he has vomited against us, we should not fail to recognise, I, at least, the services he had rendered to the socialist cause for nearly twenty-five years . . . . From this aspect undoubtedly he has left us far behind. He was also one of the first organisers, if not the instigator, of the International. From my point of view it is a vast merit which I will always recognise in him whatever may be his attitude towards us".

The second reason for which he spared Marx was tactical. For he declared he wished to divide his enemies. All the more because Marx considering his temperament certainly experienced a malicious joy in seeing his friends attacked. "In spite of this it may happen that, perhaps in a very short time, I shall enter a struggle with him, not for personal offences of course, but on the question of principles concerning the State Communism of which he and the English and German parties which he controls are the heated partisans. But there is time for everything and the hour for that clash has not yet struck".

The conflict between the two factions deepened rapidly. Among the Jurassians Bakunin retained the majority, but at Geneva the supporters of the Alliance lost the periodical *Egalité*, of which Utin henceforth assumed the editorship. Utin even put in doubt whether the Alliance belonged to the International, and the General Council did not repudiate this. Already extreme measures were being taken. As yet no one dared to attack Bakunin, but the new majority of the Federation Romande excluded Perron, Youkovsky and the Englishman Sutherland, who consequently ceased to belong to the International. The decisive struggle had begun.

The first victory of the Marxists was made easy by the fact that the Bakuninists at Geneva (the word *anarchists* was as yet little used) had no longer the support of the presence of their leader. Bakunin had suddenly left Lake Leman and had established himself at Locarno. Only a few of his intimate friends knew of his new home . . . . .

(*Note: The remainder of this chapter, being concerned not with the struggle within the International, but with the domestic reasons for Bakunin's departure to Locarno, has been omitted. Tr.*)

II.—TWO ENEMIES AND TWO DOCTRINES.

(Note:—The first part of this chapter has been omitted as it deals with the position of Mazzini in relation to the International. It contains interesting comparisons between Mazzini, Marx and Bakunin, but in our opinion appears slightly irrelevant in an extract made to illustrate the struggle within the International between the Marxists and the anarchists. Certain other very short passages which seemed redundant have also been omitted. Tr.)

Marx feared more and more that the direction of the International would escape him. Some of the federations were already won over to anarchism and their number increased continually. He decided to put an end to this. The influence of Bakunin on the working class seemed to him more dangerous than the schism and even the ruin of the International.

Against the will of the anarchists, the General Council did not believe it of any use to call a Congress of the International in 1871. Instead they called a conference at which the Jurassians were not represented. Of the twenty-three delegates who took part in it, no less than 13 were sent by the General Council. The conference contented itself with voting the general outline of the resolution to which the General Council gave later its definitive form. This resolution was directed principally against the Jurassians. It declared that the struggle of the working class for its liberation was a political struggle which should aim at a seizure of power. Furthermore, it gave to the General Council a right of control over all the organisations and the whole press of the International, which much restricted the autonomy of the federations.

However, the conference at London was a success for Marx only in appearance. Not only were the anarchists against him, but also within his own ranks revolt was threatening him. He had succeeded with difficulty in securing the election of Engels, who had just retired from his business, as a member of the General Council; but Engels, who had until then been an industrialist in Manchester, was considered by many of the workers to be a representative of the enemy class. And as soon as he entered the General Council, discord reigned.

In addition, the English working class became less and less interested in the International; their claims partly satisfied, notably in the question of universal suffrage and nine-hour day, they turned away from revolutionary agitation and sought their salvation in a reformism which, in political action, brought them under the lead of the liberals. The great support of Marxism became from henceforward the German working class party which decided to conquer

power, but solely by legal means and through parliamentary methods. The social-democrats claim to be the followers of Marx and his influence on them was greater than on any other party although he was not entirely in agreement with the popular state which was their end. However, restricted by their legality, the German workers' party denied publicly any connection with the International.

The French Internationalists who after the collapse of the commune were numerous in London, exercised for all these reasons a great influence on the General Council. But the French revolutionaries were either Bakuninists or Blanquists, and the Bakuninist organisation which the refugees founded in London as well as in Geneva was not even admitted into the International: Marx was therefore obliged to seek the alliance of the Blanquists who were in favour of the political struggle, of centralism, of the conquest of power, but against action by great parties and in favour of conspiracy by resolute minorities, which Marx abhorred.

The forces of Bakunin were enrolled in the Spanish, Italian and Belgian organisations and above all amongst the Jurassians, who, after the conference in London formed themselves into a Jurassian Federation of the International.

Like that of the Marxists the position of the anarchists became henceforward clearly defined. They were not only against the State, but even against all action which recognised the State, and above all, against any participation in the elections. In rejecting the idea of established power they also renounced its conquest and sought the emancipation of labour only in the economic and revolutionary struggle. The anarchists too, found allies who followed them more for tactical reasons than on grounds of principle. One section of the Dutch and English federations was, in effect, in agreement with them in wishing to reduce the General Council to a mere office for correspondence and statistics, but autonomy did not mean for these federations adhesion to the Bakuninist programme.

Although neither of the rival groups was homogeneous, they represented, in general, two diametrically opposed conceptions of working class action. On one side centralism, the political party which makes use of all legal means, the conquest of the State and its gradual transformation; on the other side federalism, the syndicate which flouts the law, direct action and the immediate abolition of the State. The anarchists frequently stated that in this difference they represented the Latin spirit, spontaneous and multiform, against the German spirit, systematic and uniform. The Marxists held that their theory corresponded to the conditions of countries economically most advanced, while that of their adversaries reflected the conditions and attitude of backward countries.

Naturally, the two antagonistic parties were not contented with

impersonal arguments. But Bakunin did not fail even in his more violent attacks to do justice to the merits of his adversary. "Marx", he wrote, "is not an ordinary man. He is a man of superior intelligence, a man of very great knowledge, above all in economic questions, and moreover a man who, to my knowledge, since 1845, the time of my first meeting with him in Paris, has always been sincerely and wholly devoted to the cause of the emancipation of the working class, a cause to which he has rendered inestimable services, which he has never consciously betrayed, but which to-day he compromises incessantly by his enormous vanity, by his vindictive aad malevolent character and by his tendencies towards dictatorship even within the revolutionary socialist parties".

If there are in these words—as in all the polemics of Bakunin—at least an effort to be fair, the blindness of Marx and of his friends was such that their attacks did not hesitate at the worst accusations. The journal of Liebknecht denounced even the insurrection of Lyons as the work of agents of Bismark, and Utin declared at the Congress of the Federation Romande that he would guillotine Bakunin if he had the power to do it. The role which Utin played in giving information to Marx was perhaps the most evil in this fratricidal struggle. Once he went so far as to invent the fable of an attempt on his person by the Bakuninists: he would not have escaped, he stated, had it not been for the chance intervention of some German students.

At last, Marx himself came into the arena, in publishing, under the signature of the General Council, *The Pretended Schisms of the Workers' International*. Marx was not aware of the secret society of Bakunin, but he believed that the Alliance still existed, and when he denounced the attempts to create an International within the International, he was not wrong. His pamphlet, however, creates a painful impression. The fundamental question of the debate was hardly discussed. Marx considered the anarchists either as intriguers or as agents and he fought them entirely with juridical arguments. Just as he was to say at the Hague conference that all the leaders of the British working class were sold to Gladstone, he affirmed that the leaders of the German workers who adopted the theories of Lassalle were informers, and he went so far as to suspect the integrity of Malon who had been one of the heroes of the Commune. But for him, the greatest of the intriguers was Bakunin. He did not hesitate to make him responsible for the treachery of Albert Richard and Gaspard Blanc, and he identified him unreservedly with Netchaieff, in making reference to their "foolish and infamous" maxims.

Marx had no consideration for the fact that these attacks might precipitate the fate of Netchaieff who at that moment had not yet

been arrested. He thought only of harming Bakunin.

Not a word in the *Pretended Schisms* did justice to the defender of Dresden or even recognised his good faith. According to Marx he was only a man who preached panslavism and war.

The General Council at last called a Congress which was to be held in September, 1872 at The Hague. The choice of that town provoked lively protests on the part of the anarchists, who held that the Congress should take place in Switzerland. Holland, whose geographical situation was much less central, was difficult to reach for the delegates ofthe Latin countries. Bakunin above all, had no chance of reaching The Hague for he could cross neither Germany nor France. As the General Council would not give in, the Italians decided not to participate in the Congress, which weakened considerably the anarchist forces.

When the delegates had met several days were taken up in verification of the mandates; from this resulted a sufficiently large majority of Marxists. Was this in fact the majority of the International? No one could tell, for the strength of the various federations was very unequal and some of the delegates represented "phantom federations" which existed only on paper. Particularly complicated was the situation of the Germans, who because of their respect for the German legislation did not represent the German workers' party, but federations of the International founded for the sole purpose of sending delegates to The Hague. At the same time, the proposal of the anarchists to vote not according to the number of delegates, but according to the strength of the federations was rejected.

It was under these conditions that the Congress decided to extend the power of the General Council, which was given the right to control and if it thought it necessary, to suspend the Federations, the sections and even the local committees of the International. Having gained this vote, the General Council created a sensation by demanding the transference of its headquarters from London to New York.

It is true that Marx believed that this transference would only be provisional; but, cornered between the anarchists on one side, and the heterogeneous tendencies of the British reformists and the French Blanquists on the other, he feared that the control of the General Council would escape from him and he preferred to see it situated in America, provided that it remained in the hands of his partisans and thus under his influence. The transference was voted by a small majority after a tumultuous debate. But the Blanquists, led by Vaillant, then left the Congress and at the same time the International.

The real political debate was comparatively unimportant after these events. Out of sixty-five delegates a third had departed.

Amongst the forty-three who remained the General Council still found a majority for its resolution which in conformity with that of the conference in London proclaimed the necessity of the political struggle and rejected the anarchist programme.

From the first day of the Congress a Commission was occupied with the examination of the accusations brought against Bakunin in person, and the activities of the Alliance. The Bakuninists were represented in this commission by one member only, the French police on the other hand by two stool-pigeons. Nevertheless, no conclusion was reached. It was then that Marx himself brought to the commission with great secrecy a piece of damning evidence. He had in fact succeeded in obtaining the letter of Netchaieff to the student Lioubavine, who had been the intermediary between the Russian publisher Poliakoff and Bakunin in the matter of the translation of *Das Capital*. It was the letter in which Netchaieff threatened Lioubavine and Poliakoff, in case they should continue to demand that Bakunin complete his work. Marx did not inform the commission that Lioubavine himself had written that he was convinced that Bakunin was ignorant of the contents of the letter. Nor did Marx take into consideration the promise of Bakunin to return the money which the publisher had advanced. He considered that it was theft and blackmail, and the commission reached the same conclusion.

On his proposition, the congress, before separating, expelled Bakunin and Guillaume for their participation in the Alliance. But the judgment of Bakunin carried in addition the derogatory supplement "that citizen Bakunin has used fraudulent methods in order to appropriate himself all or part of the fortune of another, which in fact constitutes swindling; furthermore, in order not to fulfil his engagements, he or his agents have had recourse to intimidation"— Twenty-seven delegates voted for the resolution, seven against and eight abstained.

It was the end of the First International before which, since the Commune, the capitalist world trembled. Before the vote the anarchists had already declared that they would take no heed of the resolutions of The Hague. Immediately afterwards they met in a Congress at Saint-Imier in the Jura. As they had the support of numerous federations the greatest hopes seemed within reason..

"To pretend", wrote Bakunin in a commentary on the Congress of The Hague, that a group of individuals, even the most intelligent and the most well-intentioned, would be capable of becoming the thought, the soul, the directing and unifying will of the revolutionary movement and of the economic organisation of the workers of all countries, is a heresy so much against common sense and against historical experience that one asks with astonishment how a man so intelligent as Mr. Marx has been able to conceive it? . . . .We do not

admit even as a revolutionary transition either National Conventions or Constituent Assembles or Provisional Governments of *so called* revolutionaries: for we are convinced that the revolution is sincere, honest and real only amongst the masses; and that when it falls into the hands of some few governing individuals it becomes inevitably and immediately reaction".

Bakunin still hoped that the unity of the International could be safeguarded. As this could not be realised in the political field, he asked that it should at least be maintained by economic solidarity. For the true unity of the International lay, according to him, "in the common aspirations and in the spontaneous actions of the popular masses of all countries and not in a government of any kind, or in a uniform political theory imposed by a general congress".

Meanwhile, the first care of the new General Council was to suspend the Federation Jurassienne. But very soon it was itself split by all manner of dissensions. Sorge who was at its head was not the man to put new life into this weakened organization. Nicknamed "the Corporal", he was so little liked that Marx had not dared to have him elected at The Hague, and he had only joined the General Council by co-option. He did his best to carry on the orders which Marx issued to him; two years later he was to sign the death warrant of what remained of the Marxist branch of the Workers' International.

The Bakuninist branch had a longer existence, but towards 1878 it also was extinguished. Broken in twain, the International could not live. In carrying on a fight to the death with the anarchists, Marx had killed it.

The work of Marx contained two tendencies, one revolutionary, the other evolutionary. It was in an evolutionary form that fifteen years later Marxism was reborn in the Second International which for a quarter of a century dominated the working class movement in Europe. German social-democracy gave it the example of a policy, apparently successful, which while protesting its revolutionary faith was reformist in practice. In a world where colonial exploitation enriched all the great powers, the share of the working class in the general wealth grew continually and in most of these States it seemed that the working class would obtain all they desired by legal means. Even in Russia many believed that it would be sufficient to establish a democratic regime for the proletariat to gain all its demands without any opposition from capitalist legality. Except in the Latin countries and particularly Spain, the anarchists declined gradually to the rank of a sect and for a long time the social-democratic illusion divested the controvery between Marx and Bakunin of any real significance.

It was only after the victory of the Bolsheviks, who had re-

surrected the revolutionary tendencies in Marx, after the downfall of German social-democracy and after the struggles of the Spanish anarcho-syndicalists, that the principle of revolutionary action gathered new strength and that the great debate between authoritarian and anti-authoritarian socialism once more became actual.

The duel between Marx and Bakunin did not end with the congress at The Hague. The reciprocal invectives continued, and Marx and Engels became more and more self-satisfied in a moralist attitude from whose height they judged Bakunin like a common criminal: "Utin", wrote Engels to a friend, "has told us still more new and very extraordinary things about Bakunin. The fine fellow has really faithfully put his catechism into practice; for some years he and his Alliance have lived entirely on blackmail . . . . You cannot imagine what a gang of scullions these people are".

Over a number of years Marx and Engels had thus accused Bakunin first of being an Agent of the Russian Police, then of wishing to appropriate the so-called Pan-Slavist funds put at the disposal of Herzen, and last of being a fraud and a master-blackmailer.

Bakunin's reputation did not suffer from these calumnies. But in introducing these methods into a factional struggle in the International, Marx created a precedent which lay heavily on the whole working class movement. Many of his disciples imitated the baseness of their master without having the excuse of his genius.

It must be said that many of the most notable Marxists do not hesitate to condemn the conduct of Marx. The father of socialist revisionism, Edward Bernstein, who was an intimate with him for a long time, wrote: "In the struggle between Marx and Bakunin the latter appeared without doubt, from a purely human point of view, in a more favourable light than his adversary; even he who believes that Marx defended in this dispute the interests of the working class movement which will permit no sentimental concession cannot fail to regret that Marx did not conduct that struggle by other means and in another manner." And Franz Mehring, the official historian of German social-democracy, declared: "It was inexcusable that anyone should still have wished to deprive Bakunin of his good name in a question of mine and thine, and unhappily the blame for it must be attributed to Marx".

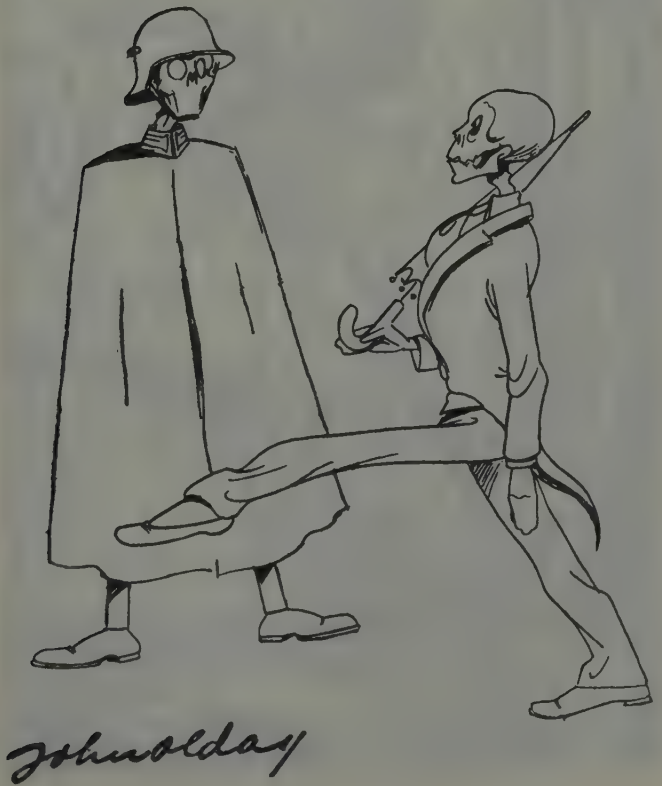
Lastly, let us quote this passage in the biography of Marx by Otto Rühle: "That he (Marx) used to triumph objectively such shameful means as the besmirching of his adversaries was a dishonourable action which did not soil Bakunin and which lowered its author.. The fatal flaw in character can be seen in this: neither political questions nor the working class movement nor the interests of the revolution. nothing concerns Marx more than himself. That

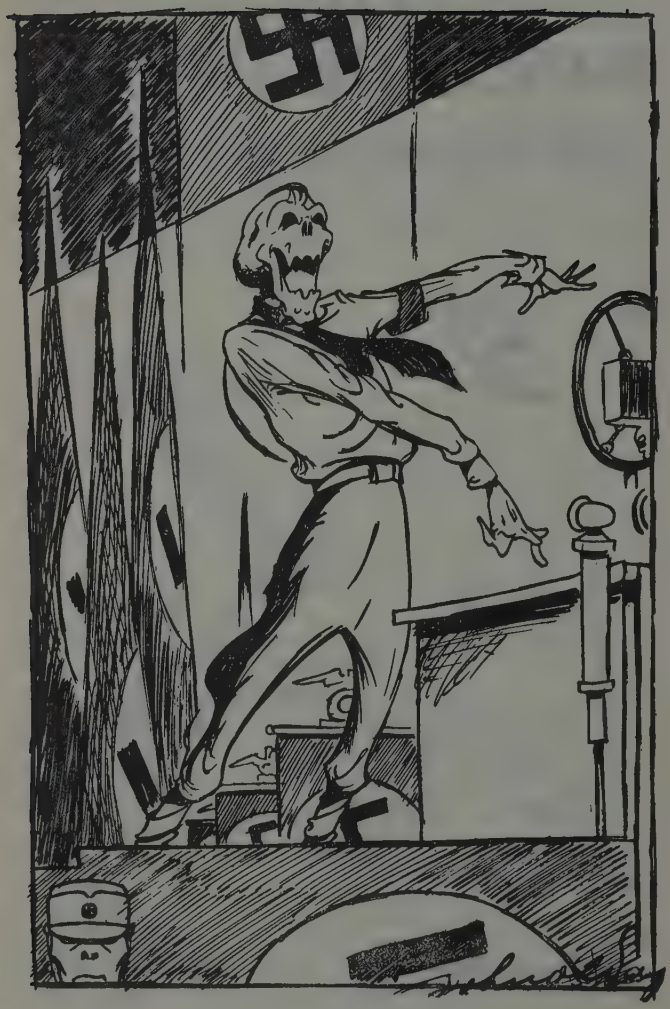
a Council of International Revolutionaries ready to overthrow on the first occassion the code of private property and bourgeois morality should have hounded, proscribed and expelled, on the denunciation of its leader, the most genial, most heroic, most fascinating of its members under the pretext of an infraction of the bourgeois laws of property, is one of the most ironic jests of history".

No step, no attempt at reconciliation was made from London. Even the death of Bakunin failed to provoke a single word of sympathy on the part of Marx. Only in 1893 when the two adversaries had slept long in the earth of exile, one in Switzerland the other in England, Engels said to Charles Rappoport, after a long diatribe against Bakunin, these unheeded words: "But he is to be respected—he understood Hegel!"

THE DANCE OF DEATH

Four Drawings by John Olday





POEMS

ULIAN SYMONS.

MR. SYMONS AT RICHMOND, MR. POPE AT TWICKENHAM.

At Richmond the people walked along by the river,
The pleasure-boats drew up beside the bank;
The apparatus of contentment
Was obvious and disturbing.

For the soldiers, slick and different in uniform,
Showed up the general failure; their blunt
Heavy look a revelation
Of the truthfulness lacking.

In these lives wrapped smoothly like a bandage
Round the outside of events; while the bone
Grows corrupt, still the covering
Flesh is washed clean and shiny,

Until the gangrene spreads and the necessary useless
Amputation is performed; the mortified flesh
Turns green, the smell of suburban
Living grows, and is killing.

At Richmond the people walked along by the river.
I thought of the people: and I thought too
Of Twickenham where the malicious
Dwarf was dressed up in buckram.

Where his alchemy of ink turned love into envy
And desire into wit: where fixed with the sharp
And terrible knife of his hatred
There wriggled and shuddered

All those whose health offended his sickness, the drinkers
And the sexual performers, Dennis and Cibber;
Theobald, the mild friendly scholar
Who knew too much about Shakespeare.

In all of them he saw his own weakness reflected.
He saw his lost genius, with power like the sun.
His life moved to darkness, the menacing
Claws clapping and closing.

The pursuit of his enemies was relentless and fearful
Until they gave in; and then he was kind.
The small bony hand hand from its agony
Stroked them and was gentle.

And as the weak spirit got revenge for its torture
His actions became more virtuous, more friendly, more good.
He died in almost complete self-deceit
Who had talked of self-knowledge,

Saying: "I have always wondered at human vanity,"
But then: "What great arm is coming out of the wall?'
And throwing himself out of bed he took the
Last sacrament kneeling.

At Richmond the people walked along by the river
And I walked with the people and was part of them
And yet something different. I felt the ripple
Of life and death on the river,

I thought of Pope, I walked on the difficult
Narrow towpath that runs between Virtue and Death
And thought in the sunset, **Which is the lesser**
Evil? Is it living or dying?

My sorrow is every man's, who requires so little
More than immediate happiness, immediate love.
Must I look at injustice? Is any other
World real? Like a feather

Night fell. The sun died. The people dispersed
And left me alone with the crooked passionate ghost,
Thinking deceit and friendship and malice
By the river at Richmond.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

THE FOUNTAIN AT VAUCLUSE.

Many years in sentimental willing exile
Petrarch moped beside the inky waters,
Posing the gentle rebel and inconsolable lover,
Expecting laurels and extolling Laura
In the sickly voice of an emotion long dead.

Meanwhile, in Avignon, married and virtuous,
Laura had brats, grew matronly and fat,
And worshipped strictly under the Papal shadow.
She hardly thought of Petrarch beside the inky waters
And died respected for every homely virtue.

After her death he left the enigmatic waters
And returned to the jaded valley at Avignon
Where, under the papal shadow and the cicada,
The laurels fell on his lined and lofty brow.

NOVEMBER.

The days grow dim. Melancholy chryanthemums
Wilt under dank shrubberies where roses
Still open, niggardly, to the winter sun
Cramped flowers like slum women's faces.

Traditional Sundays falling on villages
Set the harmonium measure, tea at the manse,
Song and the thudding of darts at the public,
Dark empty lanes returning from the dance.

The farmer walks home drunk across his acres
Beneath whose hedges rabbits and virgins scream,
And the uniformed shadows darken in corners—
Putting to time the riddle of their doom.

EMANUEL LITVINOFF.

Draining the evening of its awkward peace,
Knowing the bloodless leeching of the hour,
Our juice of manhood losing drop by drop
Arterial impulse of the summer,
And waiting—waiting for the night
Beating familiar anger in our pulse,
We stand, the idle horseman, by the bridge
We hammered to disaster.

And growing imminent to zero
Where guns crease the smooth sky with fury,
Grown to this dark flowering of violence,
The bridge becomes an arrow in our flesh,
Becomes the death who came too often
And refused web of our fate.

We ask the senseless question once again—
How did a soldier grow into our limbs,
And, having grown, where is the death
He brings and welcomes?
Where is the wounded star, the deadly archer?
For our dark angel of the stars is not a reaper,
Staunching the blood of wounds is not his aim.
Death cannot be the target of the breast,
The crumpled rib and ebbing sand of life,
Nor in the slow destroyer of our power
Is his swift flight.

War knows the butcher not the angel
Lightly brushing eyes to sudden vision,
And we, sprung to our fate, await apocalypse
The stars of birthtime promised.
Yet we wait vainly at evening that revives
Our hoping, after the disillusioned day,
We wait a brooding hour impatient stallions
To gallop through the wild air of our dreaming,
Leaping the wide bridge and tower,
And fly the wings of him who rides
The planets midnight terror,
And meeting him alone, be free for ever.

ALAN ROOK.

POLAND.

Along the banks of Vistula
a people's sorrow marches
through open wounds of houses,
their moon-bathed loins.

When comes the spring to maize and hawthorn
when does the seed return?

The polestar extracted
from the silver marshes
the coffins of 138
delicate children of Wawer.

When comes the spring to thigh and muscle
when does the seed return?

When iron night was welded
by the smallest of moons,
a million violins
sang sadly from the trains.

When comes the spring to stir the stubble
when does the seed return?

When such an hunger for death
or slow maturity of wounds?
Remember the blood flowering
in the square, the up-turned faces.

And lead the spring to heart and fibre
and let the slow seed turn.

THEODORE SPENCER.

WHY WEAVERS OBJECT.

The shuttle went weaving efficiently on and
"Ha!" said the thread as it entered the shuttle
"Now I'm alive and important!" the shuttle
Went weaving efficiently on and the thread
Was tossed in the shuttle and tossed in the shuttle
Until it was firm in the cloth and the shuttle
Went weaving efficiently on and the next
Thread that came on to the shuttle said "Ha!
Now I'm alive and important!" the shuttle
Went weaving efficiently on and the
Shuttle went weaving efficiently on and
"Ha!" said the thread as it entered the shuttle.

JOHN BAYLISS.

WORDSWORTH AND PRIOR.

If I were Wordsworth, I would remember
the bright snow burning my feet and the berries
red on the black branch late last December,
and would pay special attention to the chaffinch.

And I would feel about me a Presence
(the capital P), and would write as a Poet
informing my readers that I had seen God
in a flower or a bush or a bird or a berry.

But I am only the ghost of a Prior
who lurks in old inns and laughs with the ladies,—
too ghostly a lover to tear their thin dresses—
and the country to me is full of dead birds,
thorn in the fields, and leaf in the ditches,
mud and cold moons where the mists lie heavy
and break away only one hour at noon.

And I prefer the delicate touches
of Richmond trees,—almond, acacia,
that sway and sweep so lightly in Spring,
to walk on the hill and watch the larches
charm the faint clouds with moving fan,
or to stroll with the wind beside the river
smoothing the air with easy talk,
or, if my Lady Jane would rather,
take a carriage to Windsor Park.

And, when the rural day was over,
and all the footmen retired to bed,
and all the lies between lover and lover
said too neatly, or left unsaid,
behold the poet, fastidiously searching
for rhymes to flatter her ladyship's cat,
or, fast as a child, with his feather erecting
card-house Arcadias in his cote.

FRANCIS DOUGLAS.

We thought those plastered faces dead
Till living were seen, and worm uncurled;
That woman between to-day and to-morrow
Frays the collar at end of tether
Fretting about the corridor;
So you will find her wherever you pass
With hollow face before the door
Saying " good morning " and " good morning sir ".

Why should it make a dead man curse
To watch her weaving a daily hearse
Since nobody cares to ask her
Nobody dares to question, why she wears
That blunt monotonous spirit
No better than leather upon her foot
Running through hall and corridor,
Saying " good morning " and " good evening sir ".

J. L. GODWIN.

1942.

Golden the angel's garden,
Clear and cold,
Fatal to flesh that lingers
Into mould.

I sought out the lonely room,
Locked the unbreakable door,
Swore that phantom town and garden
Would know me never more.

Never more in giant tossed mountain,
Or leafy valley, odorous and bright,
To the sound of light laughter at morning
And silence at night.

For I awoke from that phantom land
And found chill day and an empty hand,
The cold flood breaking on empty floor
And the mountains vacant, as before.

D. S. Savage

ALDOUS HUXLEY
A Moralist's Progression

TO SAY that Mr. Aldous Huxley was one of the most accomplished novelists of the inter-war period would be to state a commonplace. That he has been a significant figure, a focus for thought and feeling, his wide audience proves. In his earlier days Mr. Huxley was read enthusiastically by many of his contemporaries, not only in England, who felt that he spoke for a generation. His books expressed the sophisticated hedonism, the "disillusionment" of the post-War period. He was detached, ironical, and he knew how to be amusing with that wryness which revealed an awareness of the corruption at the bottom of the glass of pleasure —an awareness which spiced his work and helped to distinguish it from simple amusements of the Ronald Firbank kind.

This awareness, also, was a sign of Mr. Huxley's fundamental seriousness. In this sense, the germ of *Eyeless in Gaza* was already present beneath the flippancies of *Antic Hay*. This quality made it impossible for Mr. Huxley long to gloss over the enigma of human existence and made necessary the movement towards the formulation of a valid attitude towards life which is discoverable in the progression of his work from *Crome Yellow* through *Eyeless in Gaza* to his latest novel, *After Many A Summer*.

The interior drama discoverable in Huxley's work is a significant one. It resolves into a dialogue between two contrary impulses —between the acceptance and the rejection, of human responsibility, the responsibility of being a human person understood in its fullest sense and implying responsibility for others, as opposed to the irresponsible view of human life as an irrational phenomenon, a bad joke about which nothing relevant can be done. This inward dialectic that runs like a thread through Huxley's work becomes fully explicit at intervals, but it is also expressed indirectly and unconsciously in the successive and coeval creation of "sympathetic" or "real" characters (real, that is, capable of change through inward struggle, capable of destiny), and of puppets, grotesques, "flat" characters immobilised in a static convention. One of the reasons

for Mr. Huxley's achievement as a novelist is his remarkable power of projecting separate and distinct aspects of his personality into the creation of his fictional characters. The family likeness running through the physiognomy of his various characters is very marked. But these characters, his puppets, endowed with more or less reality as their creator's sympathy moves towards or away from them, alternate with the appearance upon the scene of the Huxley character proper, the character who in the novelist Philip Quarles of *Point Counter Point* and Anthony Beavis of *Eyeless in Gaza* is an obvious self-portrayal of his author. Thus it is evident that we are dealing with the work of a writer somewhat unusually isolated from human contacts, even were not this very quality a distinguishing mark of the "autobiographical" character when he appears. But this enclosing of the novelist's horizons, while it prevents him from achieving the varied human richness of the great imaginative novel, through his impotence to penetrate sympathetically into the inward experience of other persons, yet through its very effect of isolation accentuates the interior, personal drama which is worked out through the sequence of novels. Mr. Huxley's performance, then, is very much of a one-man show, and the logic that runs through it is singularly uncomplicated.

This inward dialectic manifests itself as follows: in the earlier novels the "real" or "round" character was present only in germ. Later, the germ expanded until the resultant "real" character took the centre of the stage and became the source and focus of the action. This was Mr. Huxley grappling hand to hand with his central and and underlying problem, the result of which was an undeniable increase of depth in his work. The complete process is fully worked out in the most directly personal of all of Huxley's books, *Eyeless in Gaza*. (Then, in *After Many a Summer*, the inward process is objectified in a didactic formula through the monologues of Mr. Propter.) But the central character of *Eyeless in Gaza* achieves his highest degree of self-realisation only, by a process of self-immolation whose results are not made fully explicit until the later novel, to abdicate his position and his humanity and surrender the stage to the puppets. In this last novel, therefore, we have something that resembles a return to the earlier Huxley. There is all the suavity, the glitter, the dexterous technical accomplishment of the entertainer. But there is the difference—that the potentiality of interior development has been removed. The dialect exhausted, Mr. Huxley the novelist having come full circle, the moralist appears fully fledged with the doctrines he has abstracted from the living process.

2.

In the earlier works, *Crome Yellow* and *Antic Hay*, the possibility of development was implicit, if concealed, in the two central

characters of the respective books. Gumbril in *Antic Hay* is an older, more sophisticated version of the Denis who appears in the first novel (and in the early tale *A Country Walk*). He is partly a caricature, yet recognisably human. For instance, he has a social conscience, he is distressed at the contrast of his comparative affluence with the downtrodden poverty of the man and woman in the scene at the coffee stall. In Gumbril there is the possibility of pathos, if not of tragedy. He actually passes through a moral crisis when he is forced to choose between a genuine affection for a woman (Emily) who cares for him, and a spurious one for a woman (Myra Viveash) who does not. The serio-comic manner of its presentation is intended to take some of the sting out of the betrayal, but it is real and pathetic nevertheless. The theme of betrayal recurs in *Eyeless in Gaza*—the betrayal of love to lust.

In *Those Barren Leaves*, in some respects Mr. Huxley's most harmonious and satisfying work, there is an increase in seriousness, flippancy disappears and there is evidence of a maturer grasp of the novelist's material. But the author's attitude to his creatures is still detached, he is still deploying them from the outside. But already the future overt moralist was taking shape in the weary man-of-the-world Calamy, who towards the end of the book, leaving the pointless social life at the preposterous Mrs. Aldwinkle's, retires for a period of solitary contemplation to a hut on the mountain.

Point Counter Point, which followed it, is an interesting novel, but a very slipshod one. It is of transitional interest as marking the emergence of the central human character, the autobiographical portrayal. The disunity of the book results from the unsuccessful attempt to reconcile the puppet-world with the world of real human beings which is beginning to take shape around Philip Quarles. The effect is to diminish the brilliance of the puppet-show while at the same time giving a puppet-like quality to the would-be human characters. Almost certainly Rampion, Huxley's idealised portrait of D. H. Lawrence, with his quality of intense "livingness", was intended as a "round" figure, but the result approaches more nearly to sentimentalised caricature.

Nevertheless, the introduction of Philip Quarles necessitates a more responsible approach than was possible hitherto, for in as much as he is a representation of his author he cannot well be relegated to the two-dimensional world of the puppet-dance. It is no longer the futility of existence that concerns Mr. Huxley, but the futility of Philip Quarles, of himself. He is finding it impossible any longer to stand aside.

Brave New World, which still carries the impression of the influence of D. H. Lawrence, does not fit neatly into the sequence. It is possible to consider it, from the purely psychological aspect, as a

symbolical projection of the conflict between the ways of response to life represented by Philip Quarles and by Rampion in the preceding novel. The Savage, who is almost a pure Lawrence character (in spite of the fact that he bears no resemblance to any of Lawrence's own creations) with his religio-poetic style of life, is brought into contact with, and opposition to, the puppet-universe of the future, dominated by the demands of technology and the materialistic doctrine of the greatest happiness of the greatest number, in which spiritual freedom and human dignity have been annihilated. With the suicide of the Savage, a pessimistic conclusion to the conflict, Mr. Huxley seems to have eliminated the Lawrence toxin from his bloodstream, for in *Eyeless in Gaza* the autobiographical hero is able to emerge undistorted and fully fledged.

This novel, which is of central significance in the sequence, is written along four chronologically distinct planes of narrative, to present scenes from every relevant section of his forty-three years old hero's experience. It is the story of Anthony Beavis's escape from his too-inhuman detachment from human existence and from personal relationships and his discovery of an ethical principle and a way of life. Anthony undergoes a species of religious conversion through the discovery that he truly loves the woman whom he had hitherto been using as a mere vehicle for his sensuality. Unfortunately, he makes this discovery too late. He pursues her throughout the relevant pages of the book, but there is no satisfactory consummation of the affair. Instead, rather mysteriously, his love becomes etherealised into an abstract beneficence for humanity, a recognition of the claims of human (or rather social) responsibility, and he becomes converted to a kind of Yogi-pacifism.

We may note in passing that love, as distinct from sexuality, plays hardly any part in Huxley's previous work. Love presumes communion, but as we know, Huxley's is a one-man universe and the absence of communion is one of the central qualities of his autobiographical character when he appears. In this case, Anthony Beavis's discovery of love is allied in an inexplicable manner with horror at the degeneration through the years of a former mistress, once a brilliant and attractive woman, and now a dope-addict, a drunkard, a malicious, dishonest and squalid wreck. Although we are never fully convinced of Anthony's love for Helen, his disgust and loathing for the degrading effects of licentious and egocentric living as evinced in Helen's mother is only too apparent. Manifestly, he has a horror of imprisoning himself in the hell in which exist Beppo Bowles and Mary Amberley, whom he actually compares to the damned, unable to liberate themselves from their base subhuman condition. His urge to salvation is prompted negatively rather than positively.

The problem of salvation he approaches impersonally, and as it were technically. There is even something a little distressing about his methodical exercises in detachment and self-control, which spring from the will rather than from the heart. If Anthony achieves "liberation" it can only be at the cost of all human richness and plenitude of experience. For this reason, *Eyeless in Gaza* is at bottom a deeply depressing book.

3

One of Aldous Huxley's main preoccupations as a novelist is with the less savoury aspects of the male-female relationship. This we should expect in a world where there is no love. A certain licentiousness, ranging from the "normal" to the sadistic and perverted is the hall-mark of almost any typical Huxley character, and it is of course largely in the realm of sensual-erotic gratification that the hedonists of the earlier novels are immersed. Mr. Huxley's bedroom scenes are prominent enough to have given him something of a reputation as a highbrow pornographer—a reputation shared, oddly enough, with D. H. Lawrence, although in their attitude to sexuality the two writers have little in common but their basic puritanism. Parallel with this goes his encyclopaedic display of learning, while references to and descriptions of works of art form a considerable part of the scenic background of the novels. Thirdly, there are the musings and speculations of the scientist upon the habits of ants or infusoria—which is as near as Huxley ever gets to Nature.

We leave Anthony, in *Eyeless in Gaza,* musing after this fashion:

> Some way, Anthony was thinking, of getting beyond the books, beyond the perfumed and resilient flesh of women, beyond fear and sloth, beyond the painful but secretly flattering vision of the world as menagerie and asylum . . . .

After Many A Summer simply marks the later stage of this revulsion and reveals its nature more explicitly. In this novel a significant change occurs. The central human figure, at grips with his destiny, has dropped out. Therefore, the dimension of depth given by the focussing of the action around a human destiny disappears and the novel reverts to the two-dimensional puppet-stage where we are presented once more with a brilliant, satirical portrayal of futility jerking the strings. Where the reader might conceivably have looked for an increase in unity and power, there is in fact a return to the manner of the earlier novels. The puppets dance with no less idiocy than in the early works. Indeed, they are more grimly futile, the nausea and staleness they reveal being more apparent. And instead of the whole novel being illuminated with the author's inward understanding, manifesting itself through the characters and revealing their source of reality, the moral element

(it is hardly possible to call it religious, it approaches nearer to the didactic) is isolated into what is hardly more than a running commentary on the text. Mr. Propter, that walking embodiment of the Huxley theories of detachment and enlightenment is himself curiously detached from the body of the action. This kindly philosopher, whom the author is at pains to represent in the most favourable light as a kind of exalted Mr. Sensible, living, appropriately, on the outskirts of the millionaire Jo Stoyte's Californian estate, in his little house with its gadget for converting solar energy to run an electric generator, its electric mill and its loom "at which he had learnt and was now teaching others to weave", is strictly irrelevant to the plot, contributing little but long monologues.

The puppet characters in the book, the flute-voiced litterateur Jeremy Pordage, the ruthlessly scientific-minded sensualist Dr. Obispo and the withdrawn, practical-contemplative Mr. Propter, are all distinctive inhabitants of the Huxley universe. Can we doubt that they are all genuine fictional projections of Mr. Huxley's many-faceted personality? But the element of caricature has ingrained itself much more deeply into them than into any of the characters of the earlier novels. They are hardly human at all. Their cardboard grimaces are immutable, fixed, and their situation merely farcical. On the one hand we are given Pordage, Obispo, Jo Stoyte (how typically Huxleyan even in their nomenclature!), and, in opposition to these, exhorting them to salvation, Mr. Propter. But Mr. Propter himself is overshadowed by his doctrine. As a character he can have no sympathetic interest for us. His doctrine has eliminated the necessity for conflict. Therefore he contains no dramatic possibilities.

Mr. Propter, in fact, for all his monologues upon the impossibility of achieving good on the strictly human level and the necessity for establishing contact with Eternity, is a singularly futile figure. Pete, who must have been introduced largely to provide a mute audience for the loquacity of Mr. Propter—the naive and idealistic communist Pete, upon whom the monologues seem to be taking effect in turning his mind from the level of politics and erotic desire to the "level of Eternity", is killed off. Pordage and Propter dropping out, we are left with Jo Stoyte, Obispo—and the fifth Earl. And the book closes to the satirical laughter of Dr. Obispo contemplating the final degradation of sensual man, the futility of human existence "on the strictly human level", as symbolised by the simian figure of the eighteenth century Earl of Gonister surviving into the twentieth century in his stinking underground cavern.

Now, criticism of the novel, particularly in this place and time, cannot be confined to the aesthetic. Where morality enters into the work, providing, even, the main theme of that work, the critical

evaluation must be a moral as well as an aesthetic one. Through the work of fiction, when it attempts more than entertainment, there is a communion between writer and reader in which the writer, searching for meaning in the chiaroscuro of private experience, communicates the resultant pattern to the reader, who may then make use of this pattern to discover some aspect of his own personal meaning. In this sense, literature is scriptural.

Assuming the organic character of Mr. Huxley's creations, and entering into the role of the psychologist, we can only draw the conclusion that *After Many A Summer* is a representation of Mr. Huxley's inability to achieve an authentic integration of the elements of his own personality of which they are projections. Can his mysticism be accepted as valid when it turns away from life in order to operate in an impersonal vacuum? Life is evil, Mr. Huxley in effect says. Life can only contaminate. Only God is good. But the God of Mr. Huxley is so tenuous as to be almost synonymous with nothingness, while his Eternity is a region of colourless abstraction.

So far from achieving a unity, Mr. Huxley has thrust himself deeper into a precarious and sterile dualism. With his pre-occupation with the rarified regions of metaphysical speculation there has gone no corresponding diminution (in this last novel) of sensual-erotic interests. What is remarkable is that instead of the transfiguration of sex through mysticism there is an absolute severance between the two spheres of being. Mr. Huxley's preoccupation with sex is relegated to one compartment while his mysticism sits spectrally apart in another, and there is no commerce between them. Each can only exist in the absence of the other. In *After Many A Summer* the result emerges as an entire lack of balance between the two compartments.

> Delicious creature! The hand that had lain inert, hitherto, upon her knee slowly contracted. Between the broad spatulate thumb and the strong fingers, what smoothness, what a sumptuous and substantial resilience! . . . . .
> . . . . She would take him, and take him, what was more on his own terms. No Romeo-and-Juliet acts, no nonsense about Love with a large L, none of that popular-song claptrap with its skies of blue, dreams come true, heaven with you. Just sensuality for its own sake. The real, essential concrete thing; no less, it went without saying, but also (and this most certainly didn't go without saying; for the bitches were always trying to get you to stick them on pedestals, or be their soul-mates), also no more.

That is one compartment. Here is another.

> "What is man?" he whispered to himself . . ."A nothingness

surrounded by God, indigent and capable of God, filled with God if he so desires." And what is this God of which men are capable? Mr. Propter answered with the definition given by John Tauler in the first paragraph of his *Following of Christ*: "God is a being withdrawn from creatures, a free power, a pure working." Man, then, is as nothingness surrounded by, and indigent of, a being withdrawn from creatures, a nothingness capable of free power, filled with a pure working if he so desires.

It seems peculiarly fitting that, with such utter sensuality weighing down one end of the scale, the other should be lifted high into the airlessness of a peculiarly arid and abstract metaphysic:

"Liberation from time," he said. "Liberation from craving and revulsions. Liberation from personality." "Actualised good lies outside the prison, in timelessness, in the state of pure, disinterested consciousness."

Huxley's Mr. Propter sees existence as split up into three compartments, each segregated from the other. There is the animal level, on which the question of evil does not arise. There is the "strictly human level" on which only the accumulation of evil is possible. Lastly, there is the escape from all this into the abstract, neutral region of Eternity, the sphere of an impersonal, abstract, and ultimately (Mr. Huxley might be driven to admit) non-existent Deity.

The goal of Mr. Huxley's mysticism is an escape from life, a renunciation of the responsibilities of his human destiny. Through the series of his novels, so representative, in some ways, of the experience of a certain type of modern man, he has passed on from a juvenile nihilism to an adult realisation of the necessity for accepting responsibility, with a final solution of his dilemma in a reversion to absolute nihilism, an irrevocable shelving of responsibility sanctified by a self-bound and sterile religiosity. It is no wonder that the more intelligent reviewers, when the work appeared, saw in it Mr. Huxley's petition in intellectual bankruptcy.

As entertainment, of a rather savage kind, *After Many a Summer* has its good points. Scripturally, all that can be said is that it cannot help us. And aesthetically . . . . .

It would seem that as a novelist, Mr. Huxley has reached a dead end. His career in some ways resembles that of Tolstoi. Even more strikingly does it resemble that of the nineteenth century novelist Laurence Oliphant, with whom, as to character and background, he has much more in common. Are we to expect Mr. Huxley to give up novel-writing and turn to the composition of ethical tracts? That would seem feasible. For the novel's province is human life, human experience, and its interior significance. The thinness one is

made aware of when re-reading Aldous Huxley's novels results from his failure to discover the variety and fullness of experience. There comes a time when we lose our interest in puppets, however cleverly they are galvanised into action. Huxley's rejection of the value and significance of *personality* (which is perfectly explicit) offers no promise for future achievement in the sphere of fictional creation. When human life is seen as lacking inherent significance, and value is denied to the personal for the exaltation of an unreal and static impersonalism, it will hardly seem worth the writer's while to continue to portray human life, character, behaviour. In fact, the novelist's occupation will have disappeared. With it will have disappeared much else which is of even greater value.

George Woodcock

Culture and Society in the Restoration Period

SOCIETY is not an entity in itself. It is merely the aggregate of individuals, acting in a degree of co-operation. Similarly, culture is not an entity in itself. It is merely the aggregate of the artistic and intellectual work of individuals, on whose products a degree of similarity may be imposed by common environment.

In either case, the individual is the fundamental unit. Without the individual neither society nor culture could exist. And it is in the individual personality that man must reach any true fulfilment of his spiritual or aesthetic potentialities.

There is a trend of thought, dominant in modern society, by which the aggregations of individuals are held to have a life of their own which makes them intrinsically more important that the isolated individual. Instead of the state being regarded in its true light as an expedient—and a faulty expedient—for the administration of the affairs of men, an organisation established and maintained for the convenience of those within it, there has been a growing tendency since the French Revolution to regard it as a great super-individual to which—by the false reasoning borne of analogy—individual men and women stand in the same relation as cells to the body. Men are held to exist for the state, and not the state for men, and so a faulty perspective on society is obtained—leading to the totalitarian heresies which form the governing philosophies of almost every country to-day and under which a systematic attempt is made to convert the individual into the cellular unit.

History would seem to show that the vitality of culture runs in inverse proportion to the strength of the state. Times of stabilisation when authority is firmly held by an efficient centralised government, when the state is deified and the free action of the individual is

impeded, are most often periods of cultural sterility. Times of political disintegration, when social forms are in flux, when the power and efficiency of the government are weak, when the state is regarded lightly and the individual finds room and freedom for development, are periods of cultural growth.

At the climax of its artistic and intellectual achievement, Greece did not exist as a united and centralised state. It was a collection of city territories, all unstably governed (with the exception of Sparta —culturally the most barren) and all sufficiently small for the individual citizens at least to have the opportunity of taking part in the conduct of affairs. In this society the turbulent city of Athens became the centre of the most fertile culture the world has ever possessed, and we have only to consider the names of Plato and Socrates, Sophocles, Euripedes and Aeschylus, Phidias and Aristophanes, to realise the vitality of the human spirit in that city whose political life was so unsure. Nor was Athens alone, for many of the other cities and islands produced important groups of philosophers, poets and artists, and centuries after the high days of Attic culture, there arose in the decaying kingdom of Egypt the great cultural centre of Alexandria, a Greek colony that was to emulate Athens in its contributions to philosophy and science.

In China, the power of the central government was never ubiquitous, and in the great periods of Chinese civilisation, what government did exist was localised in a class of scholars, while by far the greater proportion of administration was carried on in voluntary manner by autonomous village and guild units.

The ancient Chinese were never a military nation and often saved their civilisation by accepting the invaders into their midst and so influencing them that they eventually lost their identity in the Chinese race. Yet this nation, which lacked the common characteristics of nationality as understood by Westerners, produced a mass of art certainly greater that that of any other race, and a body of philosophy and ethical thought as important as that which emanated from Athens.

If we turn to the nations which at present constitute Europe, we find their ages of cultural activity were also ages of political and social flux. The age of Dante and Giotto, Michelangelo and Galileo, the age of artistic achievement and scientific enquiry, lay at a time when Italy was split into a patchwork of weak principalities and city republics and was a prey to any invader who chose to march into the peninsula. The age of Bach and Handel, Mozart and Beethoven, Goethe and Heine, was also the age of German disunion when the empire was split like Italy into hundreds of independent fragments. The great period of Russian culture, of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, Turgenev and Chekhov, Borodin, Moussorgsky and Tchaikovsky,

reached its height while Tzarism was rotting towards the social upheaval that would bring its death. The most fruitful century of French culture, when painting and literature reached their peak in Degas and Cezanne, Flaubert and Baudelaire, and Paris became the artistic capital of the world, was also a century of three revolutions, two republics, two empires and two kingdoms.

The culture we regard as peculiarly English began to emerge in the turmoil of the closing phase of feudalism. There are four other periods at which it displayed outstanding vitality, and each coincided with a social flux. One was that late Elizabethan and early Jacobean period when English tragic drama reached its height in Shakespeare and Webster, and English lyric poetry in Donne, while the system of absolute monarchy instituted and maintained by the Tudors was breaking under the impact of the rising bourgeoisie. Another was the age of the Romantic revival, when English writing broke away from the mannered sterility of the Hanoverian days into the exuberance of an age characterised by the social changes and political scares associated with the French Revolution, Napoleon, the rise of industry and the Chartist movement. A third was that period generally known as the 'Nineties', when a comparatively minor revitalisation of English literature took place, which, as its dominant figures were the Irishmen Wilde, Shaw, Yeats and Moore, we must correlate not so much with the political state of England as with that of Ireland, where at that time the forces were gathering towards the end of English domination. The remaining period is that of the Restoration, when comic drama was at its height and both the novel and criticism were born.

In view of the vitality and variety of its cultural achievements, I have chosen this period for examination as an illustration of the way in which culture flourishes in inverse ratio to the stability and rigidity of the social structure.

During a phenomenal storm on the 3rd. October, 1658, Oliver Cromwell, first of the modern dictators, died and bequeathed his power to his weak son, Tumbledown Dick. A period of confusion followed, during which the major-generals intrigued against each other like Chinese war-lords. The magnificent structure of military rule erected by the Lord Protector disintegrated in the war of factions, and by the day in 1659 when General Monk marched into London, the Commonwealth was dead.

The English people emerged from their first experience of the modern national state with a deep and almost universal relief, akin to that of a people freed from war. The revolution of the puritans and the new moneyed class had degenerated into a dictatorship of Spartan and unimaginative austerity. The liberties of intellect and expression, the right of the individual to live and speak as he thought

fit, had been terribly diminished by a movement which had commenced with the object of freeing the individual, body and soul, from the toils of Stuart monarchy and Erastian religion. In place of liberty, the revolution had brought a military dictator, at the head of a ruthless system of government by the major-generals and the army. Intellectual and religious freedom had disappeared. Secular art was discouraged and the theatres were closed by an unhealthy Puritanism. The radical movements of the Levellers and the Diggers were suppressed in the interests of the chosen-by-God, the new ruling class more merciless than the aristocracy it supplanted.

The revolution was premature, and over-violent. The structure of the national state imposed on England was too rigid to be tolerable to the people, who very soon looked back with nostalgia to the days of Charles I. The impositions of that sincere fool had, indeed, never weighed heavily on the common people, and even those who had found them irksome soon felt they were preferable to the armoured rule of the Saints. In the last years the commonwealth suffered a steady loss of mass support, and it was only the prestige of Cromwell and the presence of a large standing army (already split with dissension) that preserved it so long from collapse.

With the Commonwealth fell the system of political organisation it had imposed on the country. Men had endured enough from the new state, and wished to live in a society as little as possible governed by system and the mailed fist. The man who came to administer the destinies of England during the next quarter of a century was wise enough to realise this. Charles II was an easy-going and astute man, with a laudable lack of a sense of duty and no desire for empty glories. His policy of laisser-faire in the social life of the country, his avoidance of wars, except when propelled into them by forces he could not control, his personal example of free living and his encouragement of the arts and sciences were what England needed in his age. Under him England became a land unburdened by imperial gains or military glory, and the interim he held between dictatorship and the Whig oligarchy was characterised by a remarkable and beneficial decay of the centralised governmental machine.

To us living to-day it is difficult to realise how weak the state was in the days of Charles and how little it interfered with the life of the average citizen. Charles, indeed, had but little need of a strong state machine. He preferred accepting money from Le Roi Soleil, on a pretence that he was about to establish the Roman church, to asking Parliament for further taxes. The country was involved in as little war as he could manage, and the small standing army, paid out of his privy purse, was kept to guard against a possible coup d'etat of the Whig nobility. In fact, it was so small

that the train bands of the city could easily have defeated it, and as parliament refused to recognise any standing army, it was subject to no military law—and consequently not very well disciplined.

With no heavy direct taxation and no large military obligations the necessity for a centralised organisation did not arise. In consequence, authority was far more disseminated that at present, and instead of ruling through a great standing army, a permanent police force and a swarm of paid civil servants and local officers, the king governed through the municipal corporations and the country gentlemen, who raised the militia, policed the country, administered justice, distributed assistance to the poor, maintained the roads, and, in general, carried out without remuneration all those services which now require an enormous permanent bureaucracy for their proper performance. These burgesses and squires were jealous of their rights and, remembering both Cromwell's dictatorship and his predecessor's attempts at absolute monarchy, resisted any efforts to filch their powers from them. This antipathy to the idea of despotism, coupled with the king's own antipathy to the idea of handing over power to an oligarchy, produced the neat balance of powers and intentions that gave the Restoration period its peculiar freedom from national rule.

The social system also tended towards a much greater regionalism than exists at present or had been allowed to exist under the Lord Protector. The county, the county town, even the village, were then entities on their own, to a great extent self-governing and imbued with a considerable degree of local patriotism. Travel was more difficult, and men tended to become set in the ideas, the prejudices, the customs, and the peculiar speech of the areas from which they came. This applied even to the gentry, few of whom travelled far beyond their native county or acquired the manners of the towns and cities. Indeed, the country gentleman in London was very much out of his element, and became the object of the hostility of the citizens and the satire of wits and playwrights. Sir Wilful Witwoud in Congreve's 'The Way of the World' is typical of the cultured townsman's idea of the rural squire.

London represented in those days an integral social and cultural unit, whose citizens enjoyed a considerable autonomy and were imperious in their independance. Macaulay said, "London was to the Londoner, what Athens was to the Athenians of the age of Pericles, what Florence was to the Florentines of the fifteenth century'. When we consider the intellectual and literary activity in London at that time, the comparison with the two great city republics does not seem inapt. Politically, London played an important role. Its train bands formed a military force of twenty thousand men, the largest in the country—which had acted decisively on two occasions during

the civil war and taken a leading part in the movement against the major-generals before the Restoration. London was also immeasurably more wealthy than the rest of the island, and by this financial power gained an influence over the governments of the country. Again to quote Macaulay, 'It is no exaggeration to say that, but for the hostility of the City, Charles the First would never have been vanquished, and that, without the help of the City, Charles the Second could scarcely have been restored'.

In a fluid society, where the central government was weak and power disseminated among regional units, where the puritanical restraints on life and manners had largely vanished, where authority, even if occasionally tyrannical, was spasmodic in its attacks on the individual, there existed conditions for individual personal development similar to those of ancient Athens, mediaeval Florence or nineteenth century Paris, and for the life of Charles II and some years after, until about the end of the century, the eccentricities of the free human spirit were expressed in a plethora of artistic and scientific achievements unexcelled in England at any comparable period before or since.

In science, the long unattended empirical teachings of Francis Bacon began to bear fruit nobly. The first year of the Restoration was marked by the foundation of the Royal Society, and the spirit of scientific curiosity inspired educated men of every rank, including judges and bishops, courtiers and politicians. Prince Rupert invented mezzotinto, and the king himself had a laboratory in which he worked more energetically than at affairs of state. He also founded Greenwich Observatory,—characteristically, on the proceeds of a sharp deal in damaged gunpowder!

Harvey published his researches into the circulation of the blood, and medicine began to free itself from mediaeval superstitions Ray and Sloane carried out their pioneer work on natural history, and experimental methods were established in agriculture and horticulture, where men like Evelyn and Temple started the revolution in technique. Boyle made his important discoveries in chemistry, and the allied sciences of physics and astronomy attained a great impetus from the work of such men as Sir Isaac Newton (whose theory of gravitation was published in 1687), Edmund Halley and John Flamsteed, the first astronomer royal.

If we turn to the arts, we find that both in architecture and in music this was the period of our greatest native artists, namely Wren and Purcell. In painting and sculpture the age was indeed curiously barren, but the English have rarely excelled in the plastic arts, and their paucity was amply compensated by the amazing fertility of writing.

The Restoration period is marked by at least five recognisable

developments in English literature. The most important was the fine flowering of the drama at this time, when comedy reached its height in the works of Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh and many lesser figures, and tragedy produced, in Dryden's 'All for Love', a play ranking with the tragedies of Shakespeare.

This was also the age when the novel began to take definite form, in such works as Mrs. Behn's 'Oroonoko', the predecessor of the novels of Defoe.

The remaining three developments are connected mostly with that greatest of all the Restoration figures and possibly, when all is told, most influential among English writers, John Dryden. To Dryden, more than to any other writer, we owe the parallel development, during this period, of the first real English literary criticism and of a prose style, different from the exuberant but cumbrous style of Elizabethan and Jacobean prose, that could be used, simply, clearly, and with dignity, for the purposes of exposition and discussion. It was Dryden who first began to work out the principles of literary and dramatic construction and to seek for definite criteria of judgment in these matters. With justice, Doctor Johnson called him, 'the father of English criticism'.

Dryden was also responsible for the developments of satirical poetry, and in particular of political satire, and his 'Absalom and Achitophel' remains the best work of its kind in English literature.

This was the age in which Milton wrote his epic masterpieces and Vaughan composed the best devotional poetry in the language. Now, too, the diarists, Evelyn and Pepys, recorded the life of their time with an eloquence that has not been exceeded, and English journalism commenced in the newsletters, in the few early newspapers, and in the political pamphlets that were beginning to appear in really considerable numbers.

The Restoration, it will be seen from this catalogue of achievements, was a time when men, taken from a period of austere restraint into one of almost complete freedom of morals and expression, were able to fulfil their peculiar and eccentric selves with a vitality and versatility that has never been exceeded.

There was an element of personal anarchism in the attitude of most of the Restoration intelligentsia. They disliked Puritanism. and it was more than a desire to keep in with the court that made the dramatists attack the Puritans. The spirit of such plays as Aphra Behn's "The Puritans" is not so much of kicking a beaten enemy as of demonstrating a repugnance for a system of moral tyranny whose political manifestation all decent men remembered with horror. The men of the Restoration had an ideal of the rational life, and they attempted to carry this into their acts, and to govern their lives by a balance of satisfactions rather than by an arbitrary

system of morals or laws. They resented interference, and their plays are full of attacks on moralists, the legal system, marriage, and on any and every kind of person who led an unhealthy and unbalanced life because their ideas and actions were governed by an obsessive purpose. But we find little in the way of social ideas that can be compared with the mature social vision of Winstanley in the previous generation.

After the final establishment of William of Orange, impotent in contrast to the active sexuality of Charles and thus symbolic of the age to come, the spirit of the Restoration dominated English literature, and particularly the English drama, for at least another decade. Congreve, whose works were the best both of Restoration and English comedy, wrote all his plays during this period, and then, as if he realised the times were becoming uncongenial, wrote nothing of importance from "The Way of the World" in 1700 to his death in 1729. Wycherley, his great predecessor and rival in achievement, had already ceased playwriting before the death of Charles II, but a few dramatists, such as Farquhar, continued to write comedy in the Restoration manner into the early years of the 18th century. Dryden, meanly deprived of his laureateship and reduced to poverty by the Revolution, died in the last year of the seventeenth century.

With the accession of William III, however, the change in the social structure began. In the establishment of the Bank of England and the National Debt, the victory of the bourgeoisie was recognised, and William's campaigns against Louis brought about a strengthening of the state machine which, although more cautious, less obvious and less rapid than that of Cromwell, was in the end to prove as efficient and much more hardy.

At the same time literature, and the arts in general, began to decline into a flatness and sterility from which they did not recover until the double shocks of Blake and the French Revolution precipitated the Romantic revival. There were, it is true, a number of great writers at this time, but they were almost all isolated figures, and some of them, such as Swift and Defoe, had their roots in the seventeenth century, while Pope was much influenced by the work of Dryden and the friendship of Wycherley. But there were, until the end of the century, no important developments in the form of English literature that had not begun in Restoration days.

Alagu Subramaniam

A Country Girl

WHEN the German Blitzkrieg was at its height, I left London suddenly and fled to the country in search of Peace. I went to Wembury, a tiny village with a few cottages, a couple of caravans, one solitary village shop, no library, but Peace, it was wonderful.

The pleasure of the country is in its monotony, I reflected. In bed I listened to the roar of the sea. No sound of planes overhead, and I was able to think of my girl-friend.

I woke from my dream and swallowed the saliva that had gathered like a foam in my mouth. I sat up and gazed at the sea, on the moonlit waves. The sea was calm, the waves had lost their speed, and moved slowly, gracefully in curves. The roar of the sea had subsided, and instead I heard a gentle tired pant.

The next morning I was seized with a longing for the town. I told my friends, who were sharing my exile, that I was going to Plymouth to shop. I decided to walk to town.

I asked the way to Plymouth from a local farmer. He said he would direct me to Plymstock which was only three miles from the village, then I should ask again. The entire distance is only seven miles, he added.

"Is there any place on the way, where I could get a cup of coffee?" I asked.

"You'll soon be in Plymouth before you need a cup of coffee," he replied.

But I soon discovered that walking in the country did not suit me. I had to walk up steep roads to Plymouth and I began to pant like the sea. I saw a man in uniform come out of a house and follow my path. I slowed down with the intention of speaking to him. There was no need for me to ask the way. The farmer had instructed me splendidly. But I felt rather uncomfortable at the sight of a soldier. I knew he would be suspicious of me and start cross-examining me.

The soldier soon caught me up. He stared at me. I decided that the best course for me would be to speak first and thus hide my fear and nervousness.

"Is this the right way to Plymouth," I asked.

"Yes," he replied abruptly.

"Are you a stranger to these parts?"

"Yes. I am from London. I actually want to get to Plymouth"

"I see."

"I like your walking stick," I said to disguise my uneasiness. He didn't reply. I tried once again at a pretence of friendliness, but he definitely showed his unwillingness to converse.

We walked up the steep road in silence. He alertly, in military fashion, I panting by his side. The distance seemed much more than three miles.

"This is Plymstock," he said, stopping at the junction of four roads, "and that is the way to Plymouth; straight road, but you could catch a bus here."

"Thank you very much," I said.

I expected him to move on, but he waited and looked at me.

"May I see your identity card?" he said.

"With much pleasure," I replied.

He scrutinised it and gave it back to me.

"I am a British subject," I added.

"I go the other way," he said, "I should take a bus to Plymouth, it's a long way."

I didn't answer him, and instead made a sour face. He turned his back to me and went on his way.

I stopped awhile at the bus stop. Perhaps I shall ride to Plymouth, I said to myself, I am already tired. I saw a girl waiting a few yards away. I smiled at her. She acknowledged it. She is quite smart for these parts, I reflected, maybe a London girl. She didn't stay in one spot. She was restless. She moved in concentric circles, round a particular orbit, kicking the tiny stones. Now and again she lifted her eyes from the ground and acknowledged my smile. I was restless too, but in a different way.

The bus was a long time in coming. I decided to move on.

"Is this the right way to Plymouth?" I asked.

"Yes," she replied, "but the bus will be here in a few minutes".

"I think I'll walk," I said.

"It's a long way," she said.

I smiled and started to trudge.

"The bus will soon be here," she repeated.

I looked back and smiled again.

"I have a pound note and no change," I said. "It's a nuisance to get change."

"Oh, but she might have a ten shilling note," she said.

"That's doubtful," I said, "I think I'll walk."

I had hardly gone a quarter of a mile, when I saw the girl running to catch me up. I stopped for her. She panted when she

reached me.

"I have never run like this before," she said.

"Oh, how kind of you," I said.

For a moment I thought she was going to suggest walking with me to keep me company.

"Listen," she said, "let me pay your fare. I should have offered it then, but I forgot".

"No, you mustn't do that. I think I'll change my pound note after all, and let me pay your fare."

"No," she said, "you'd better keep your pound, and do let me pay for you."

"If you insist," I said, and we both waited for the bus.

The green bus to Plymouth soon arrived. The passengers were carrying large shopping bags. A female conductor went round punching the tickets. My companion discreetly passed me half-a-crown under cover of her bag.

"You buy the ticket," she said, "only for yourself, as I have got a season ticket,"

I bought a single ticket, The fare was five pence. I gave the change back to the girl when nobody was looking.

"Do you like the country?" she asked.

"Yes, I said, "Wembury is very beautiful. Lovely trees. The roar of the sea is marvellous and the speed of the waves is amazing".

She looked at me curiously and after a pause she said:

"And you walked all the way from Wembury. It's very far you know." She started to laugh.

"But a local farmer told me it was only three miles to Plymstock."

"Farmers always lie about distances," she said, "didn't you know that? You are a baby." She laughed again. "Don't you find Wembury too quiet after London," she asked amidst her laughter.

"Yes, it's rather quiet except for the sea. But Peace, it's wonderful." I quoted Saroyan. The quotation didn't mean anything to her.

She stopped asking me questions and I realised it was my turn.

"Do you work in Plymouth?" I asked.

"Yes," she replied, "but I'm not on my way to work now. I go much earlier than this. I have been on leave the last few days, now I am going to see a girl friend."

"Don't you get any bombing in these parts?"

"There is bombing in Plymouth, but not as much as in London. No bombs ever fall on Plymstock, where I live, and in Wembury where you are, well . . . . . ." She laughed again.

"Why do you laugh?" I asked.

"Well, what is there to bomb in Wembury—a little village." She laughed louder than before.

"You are a naughty boy," she said, "You are not carrying your gas mask."

"I haven't got one. My gas mask was in my bombed flat in London." I laughed for no reason.

"It's no laughing matter." She was frightened like a baby.

"It was kind of you to have paid my fare," I said.

"sh, sh, sh," She silenced me.

We soon reached Plymouth. Women with shopping bags went to their respective shops. We stood still looking at each other.

"I want a haircut," I said, "and a shave."

"Come this way," she said. Outside the hairdressing saloon she tried to say good-bye.

"Not yet," I said, "I would like to see you later. Could you meet me in half an hour's time? I will then be clean and ready."

"Would you like me to?"

"Of course!"

"All right. I'll see you outside here in half-an-hour's time."

The hairdresser cut my hair according to my instructions, and shaved me without too much tickling. Outside the girl was waiting for me, having arrived there a few minutes before time.

"Thanks very much for coming," I said, "I want to do some shopping, perhaps you could guide me since you know the town better."

"What do you want to buy?" she asked.

"I want underwear first," I said.

"Well, I'll take you to the shop but I shan't come in with you to buy underwear. I'll wait outside."

After I had bought the underwear, we went to Lyons for lunch, I was hungry and ordered a big lunch, but the girl only wanted a small coffee. She was not hungry, she said.

"What's your name?" I asked.

"Beatrice," she replied, "but everybody calls me Betty."

"That's interesting," I said, "I was in love with a girl called Betty. She was my first girl-friend. I was quite innocent until then".

I expected her to smile, at least to nod like my painter girl-friend in Bloomsbury, who admired frankness. But Betty looked away and didn't say anything.

"What's your name?" she asked.

"Hari," I said, "spelt with an 'i', another name for Lord Siva."

My remarks didn't mean anything to Beatrice and fell flat like my quotation of Saroyan.

"Plymouth is a strange town," I said, "it runs in circles like Rome, but without the grandeur of Rome."

"I wouldn't know that," she replied, "you have travelled a lot."

"Only in Italy and France," I said.

"Have you lived in Paris?"

"Yes."

"How wonderful."

"I was there last summer with an Australian girl. We were living together. I was very much in love with her, but the war separated us. She had to go back home."

Betty looked away at the people in the cafe. I said more about my Australian girl but she was not in the least interested.

I called the waitress and asked for the bill. She charged twopence for Betty's coffee. I had intended to give back the money Betty had paid for me by way of lunch, but things didn't work out that way.

We then went to the market and bought a chicken. I invited Betty to dinner at Wembury, suggesting that she should come and share the chicken with me and my friends, but she had an appointment with a girl friend. I asked her to see me the next day, but she had another appointment with another girl friend.

"You see Betty," I said, "I am rather lonely in Wembury. I would like you to be my girl friend?"

"We can be friends," she said

"I mean, will you be my girl friend?"

"What do you mean," she asked. "I'll be your friend, and I am a girl. So I am your girl friend. Is that what you mean?

"You know what I mean," I said smiling.

"Like you and your Australian girl?"

"Like me and my Australian girl."

"No thanks," she said and turned her back to me and walked away. I followed Betty carrying my chicken and shouting her name. Betty ran and I ran after her.

"Betty! Betty!" I called after her.

A police constable stopped me, stared at me first, then in the direction of Betty and asked me to produce my identity card. I started to shiver while fumbling for the card.

"I am a British subject," I said.

"Let me see your identity card." he said, "and why were you chasing that girl? You'd better explain that at the police station. Come!".

He held me by the arm and forcibly led me. I was frightened and didn't know how to get out of the difficulty.

I looked up at the sky, bewildered. The sirens suddenly sounded like the combined wail of a hundred women. The constable started to blow his whistle, and forgot all about me. The people ran to the shelters from different directions. The guns boomed and I ran to the nearest shelter.

Julian Symons

A POET IN SOCIETY

RUINS AND VISIONS by Stephen Spender (Faber and Faber 6/-)

LIFE AND THE POET by Stephen Spender (Secker & Warburg 2/-)

These two books show fully all the qualities in Mr. Spender's writing that make it almost equally admirable and irritating. Here again is the verbal skill and extreme sensitiveness, the sincerity which is sometimes impressive and sometimes embarrassing; the generous concern for the future of humanity, and the nostalgic self-pity; here in the prose is the confusion of thought and frequent clumsiness of phrase which we have learned to expect and regret. These last two qualities have always been much more evident in Mr. Spender's prose than in his verse: and *Life and the Poet* which advances by implication, and sometimes explicitly, a high thin and cloudy view of the poet's nature and function, serves in one aspect as a commentary on *Ruins and Visions*: one can point to the ideas advanced in this book of prose and say that it is because Mr. Spender holds those ideas that he is a poet with peculiar limitations which have often checked his poetic genius. *Ruins and Visions* seems to me Mr. Spender's best book of poems, and a very fine moving book it is; while I find myself in violent disagreement with the general ideas advanced in *Life and the Poet*. The root of this disagreement can best be shown I think, by putting beside some quotations from *Life and the Poet* an indication of what seems to me a more satisfactory view of the relation of life and poetry: even the relation between "Life" and Mr. Spender's own poetry.

Throughout *Life and the Poet* the idea of the individual's *isolation* recurs. This isolation of the individual from progressive elements in society is something to which Mr. Spender has never been reconciled, and has never fully understood. He has tried in the past to show his goodwill in support of the political Left Wing, but has been rejected, or finds himself exacerbated, by many of its representatives. He sees objectively, but also shares personally, all the failures and difficulties of the intellectuals of the 'thirties. The uneasy attempts to participate in politics, to stifle doubts, and conceal backslidings from the party line, have been more notable in

Mr. Spender than in any other writer of his generation. At every politico-literary step he has been attacked by his fellow-intellectuals for committing the treason of the clerks by abandoning the detachment proper to a member of the intelligentsia, and attacked on the other side by party members for failure to conform strictly to a party view. It is not surprising, but it is perhaps equally not fortunate, that in the first chapter of this book he comes down heavily on the politicians of the Left: "The ultimate aim of politics is not politics, but the activities which can be practised within the political framework of the State. Therefore an effective statement of these activities—such as science, art, religion—is in itself a declaration of ultimate aims around which the political means will crystallise," (p. 20) "A society with no values outside politics is a machine carrying its human cargo, with no purpose in its institutions reflecting their cares, eternal aspirations, loneliness, need for love." (p. 24) "The creative mind must never entirely subscribe to any kind of Sabbath-Pharisaic, Jewish, Christian, Roman, Communist or British Imperialist." (p. 26). The intellectual, says Mr. Spender, should be asking questions, not accepting other people's answers.

Now this argument about the failure of the life of the spirit in a society, or individuals, concerned predominently with the question of power, is an old one; it is one often used (in a less subtle form) by right-wing Conservatives to attack the Soviet Union; and it is an argument simply answered. Man is a social animal: and his creative acitivities—"activities which can be practised within the political framework of the State"—are part of his social life. It follows that to talk about a statement of *artistic* aims round which *political* means will crystallise is to talk nonsense. A new view of society must precede a new view of art: society fashions art, art does not create a society. It is therefore a delusion to believe that any artistic aims are ultimate, since no state of society is ultimate: artistic aims are instead fashioned out of the social life of the time, which is in turn influenced by the tradition of social life and art which it has accepted as a heritage. "Eternal aspirations," loneliness, and yes, the "creative mind" itself vary in form with the society that contains them. A society gets the art it deserves.

This much abbreviated outline of the relation between society and art is one that I think Mr. Spender would not wholly reject. He believes in no absolute: yet he sets up "the creative mind" as a kind of absolute. There is a confusion, or contradiction, in his thought that makes him refuse to accept the logical implications of the fact that art is a part of the superstructure of society: throughout this book he persists in attributing to art a magical value, which he sets somehow apart from the values of ordinary living. Sometimes this leads him into sentimental rubbish: "Through the clear waters

of their (Keats' Milton's and Byron's) being we look down on the tainted, polluted mud of their actions, and we see how maimed, how blundering, how blind is the world of action compared with the world of being." The confusion here is typical: Mr. Spender refused to admit that the "world of being", of an artist's creation, is merely part of a man's life: but it is part of his life, and if sometimes we find a gap between the events in a man's life and the expression of them in writing or painting, we shall explain it not in magical but in psychological terms. Sometimes Mr. Spender writes so vaguely as to lose any recognisable meaning. "Poetry . . . .is the attempt to imagine . . . .the universal nature of man's being" (pp.367). "The faith of poetry is that everything in life is an expression of the fundamental conditions in life". (p.41). "The task of poetry does not go further than asserting the real situation of life." (p. 46). "There is only true poetry and false poetry" (p. 110). "He (the poet) must have, above all else, the courage to be himself" (p. 110). It is impossible to comment usefully upon writing on this level.

The heavy stress placed on "life" in this book is occasioned by an irrational dislike for the logic which binds the poetry written to-day inside our routine of living; a routine which exists as much for those who try to be "free" and who write from a position of freedom which is in fact false, as for those who are consciously, and even willingly bound. The contradictions implicit in his own attitude, most notably his refusal to admit art as something fashioned by the society of its time, have led Mr. Spender to the slack writing and over-simplification contained specially in the first and last chapters, and at intervals all through this book.

With it all there is some good sense and good phrases. "Whitman's poetry is a vast superficial experience, the surface of a sunlit plain of waving democratic corn." Of the robot big business man: "Their lives are simply their Achilles' heel". And of poetry: "The writing of poetry is simply one aspect of being alive to-day." If Mr. Spender were able always to accept that fact he would have written a better book. It is a pleasure to turn to the poems.

The conflict which is apparent always in the prose, is present here also; but in the poetry it appears quite simply as a struggle between the individual Mr. Spender worried about his own life and the things that happen to him through (he realises) his capacity for loving and being hurt where others would be amused or indifferent, and that other Mr. Spender who is anxiously, and sometimes pettishly, concerned for the spirit and future of humanity. The group poems called *A Separation* in *Ruins and Visions* is about the individual Mr. Spender; and these with the poem *June*, 1940 in this book are, I think, the best poems he has yet written. In the

last eight years Mr. Spender's poems have gone through a steady refining process during which bits of unessential or ornamental imagery have been knocked off, leaving a plain, white surface, modest and unexceptionable, but often oddly unsatisfactory (I have had the feeling when reading *Vienna* and much of *The Still Centre* that Mr. Spender would have made these books a fair blaze of Brookeish colour and sentiment if he had not known that to be *wrong*); what makes these particular poems so notable is the measure of conscious control excercised by the poet over the insurgent personal matter, and the use, almost for the first time since his early *Poems*, of easily moving rhythmical lines, and of imagery which is neither lush nor bare. These poems are well integrated wholes, something more than fine elaborations on a single image or impulse; the individually memorable phrases no longer stick out from the poem's surface, but are merged so that they are not immediately recognisable as fine phrases at all: the imagery has no longer that curious naivete and awkwardness, sometimes beautiful, sometimes ugly or ridiculous, that has marked Mr. Spender's work in the past. Here the images are often surprising but always appropriate inside the poem (as, to give an obvious example, in *The Wild Race* whose "teethstamped words /Which still flash with eyes/ Where, whiter than paper/Their day dazzles libraries"): the freshness and charm which is characteristic of Mr. Spender at his best shows in all the poems in this first section; and, because of the deep feeling with which the poems have obviously been written, the equally characteristic masochism and self-doubt which pervades them is markedly moving.

And still there is something unsatisfactory: the very self-doubt upon which the first group of poems is largely built limits sharply their range and shows up their nature; they are, viewed dispassionately, an excellent picture, from the interior as it were, of the petty bourgeois overwhelmed by personal loss. These poems, beautiful and moving as they are, illustrate nevertheless the difficulties of artistic creation for the petty bourgeois (a term which is not offensively used), who is occupied by the collapse of the personal life and has yet a sense of social responsibility unfulfilled. There is a variety of answers, but no happy answer, to that question which few writers, and fewer poets, dare to formulate: Can I retain my bourgeois friends, my way of living, my sense of beauty and horror, all the things that I appreciate *as an idividual*, and yet retain a social consciousness which tells me that these things are part of a collapsing economic order? One answer to this question is given by Auden, who lives in America, another by the many young men who have stopped writing poems and are immersed in the destructive element of *action*, another still by Yeats and Laura Riding: